Ross Dowson archives – Correspondence -- Year 1959

01_14 Letter to Brian, Chicago (to a Canadian in the USA (about Canadian politics)

01_26 Letter to Michael Ward (to a donor to WV from an American socialist)

01_26B Letter Dear Joe (Johnson, in prison in Buffalo)

02_17 +Letter to Ruth (Bullock) Vancouver: Her taking on Organizer role as the movement begins to recruit, with a new HQ, as the Socialist Information Centre (SIC); news of public Forums, personnel problems

02_19 Letter to Dear Comrades Byron and Phyllis (in BC) re developments in BC

02_20 Dear Angus (McPhee? BC) re movement bookstore growing, activities of the Branch, progress in Ontario

02_26 Letter to Joseph Johnson, c/o Madison, Wis. Avro cancellation, books & prison life

02_99 *+(Undated and unaddressed letter found in 1959):* Toronto youth group expanding, Paddy Stanton intervening on unemployment issue, our need to run one candidate in coming election even if against the CCF, Coldwell's rotten positions

03_24 Letter to Joseph Johnson, in prison in Springfield Miss.; class struggles in Canada

03_25 Letter to Dear George and Mildred Johnson re Joe's sentence

04_19 Letter to Dear Gerry (McKinney?) re good sub drive results in BC; the national tour in Ontario and activities of the Stalinists

04_23 Letter to Mesa (sub for J. Johnson)

04_22 Letter to Joseph D. Johnson: possibility of parole, developments in the Canadian movement and politics

04_29 Letter to Patterson, Montreal: developments in Quebec left and the danger of a ``national anti-monopoly front`` line

05_08 Letter to Jack Batten, *Toronto Daily Star* re his review of a Trotsky biography and other works by LT he could consult

05_16 Transcripts of two taped radio broadcasts: "Revolution" (technology vs. unemployment); "Automation" (share benefits with shorter hours)

05_99	(undated) handwritten letter (2 pp) to Jerry (Houle) re municipal election campaign
06_22	Letter to Joe (Johnson, in US prison?) activities in the Canadian movement
07_03	Letter to Vincent (Dunne), Minneapolis re Joseph Johnson
07_23	+(Handwritten letter, "Friday") to Ruth & Reg (Bullock, Vancouver): must wait for PC meeting to deal with BC "situation"
07_24B	Letter to Joseph D. Johnson re the Canadian movement and his health in prison
07_24	Letter to Danny Freeman (SWP, US) on tour truck details and advice from Canadian experience with tours
07_25	+("Sunday," July 25? Handwritten letter) to Reg Bullock, Vancouver: believe BC opposition to running candidate in the East an error, cannot call PC meeting, will election cancel plans due to BC intransigence
07_25B	+Letter to Ruth, Reg and Malcolm (Vancouver): impossible for the centre to act quickly in face of resignations from movement in BC, faced with two branches in BC and Bill (Whitney) leaving; PC discussing division and the need for a liaison body
07_28	Letter to the Johnsons, Milnes Landing (BC): the struggle against BC Bill 43; the Ontario tour (page 2 missing)
08_02	Letter to Mike Patterson, Socialist Party, Montreal; no contact between socialists, our progress on tours and sub sales; our activities bearing fruit
08_04	Letter to Vincent Dunn (SWP) Minneapolis, re: parole application for Joe Johnson
08_10	+Letter to Comrades: lengthy correspondence from BC re recent division of movement into two branches; grievances and solutions to problem considered, a liaison committee needed
08_23	+Letter to Reg (Bullock, Vancouver): many words over big labor struggle in BC against Bill 43, but no concrete action; line of paper will be "defy the injunctions, fill the jails" and for a general strike led by unions involved
09_02	Letter to Joe (Johnson, incomplete) re pending move to Queen Street West location
10_05	Letter to Vincent (Dunne, SWP) re parole condition that Joe Johnson has a job upon parole

10_08 Letter to Joe (Johnson): report from Vince Dunne that a job is waiting for Joe upon parole; our HQ moved in Toronto

10_10 +Letter to Ruth (Bullock, Vancouver): re: positive developments in BC; Toronto conference and resignation by Bruce and Bunny (Batten) with their declaration

11_04 Letter to the Editor*, Toronto Globe & Mail,* (RD as past mayoralty candidate urges city bylaws on safe housing be enforced)

11_13 Letter to Vic (Haines, Kingston) on literary trends and criticism; on the movement in BC and the SWP convention

11_00 *(Undated, found in November):* "Good or bad" (the stock market): transcript of radio broadcast

12_07 Letter to Joe (Johnson): his pending parole; the defection of Bruce & Bunny (Batten); local politics

12_07B Letter to Vincent Dunne, Minneapolis, Minn. Re Joe Johnson's pending parole

12_17 +Letter to Ruth (Bullock, Vancouver): Developments in Toronto and in BC, also the USA. Campuses opening up in Ontario, activity in the CCF

12_28 +Letter to Ruth (Vancouver): a letter from Bill (W.) complaining about lack of collaboration between branches

12_30 Letter to Mrs. & Mrs. Johnson, Wis. USA re Joe's pending release to a job in Minneapolis

12_97 *+(Undated handwritten notes found in 1959)* RD records quotes from "Marx – on his own views" (Correspondence); Marx on the dictatorship of the proletariat and the proletarian party

12_99 "Document written upon defection of Bruce and Bunny Batten – not finished and not circulated, written by RD" (undated note by R.D. found in 1959)

569 Yonge Street
Toronto, Ont.
January 14, 1959

Brian, Chicago

Dear Brian;

Received your note this morning--and one from Howard a day or so ago. I suppose Howard wants a reply right away but I am hitting both of you with the same postage stamp.

Glad to hear you are really going to get into the thick of things with our Chicago comrades. I dont know any of the comrades in Chicago But I dont have to since they are Trotskyists or trying to become Trotskyists. It is with them that you can only carry on any purposeful activity and I am sure that there are amongst them some comrades with whom you can become real friends.

Does this mean Brian that you have changed your mind about returrning to Canada? I ask this only as a point of information for Chicago is a most important city where you can no doubt do some excellent work and where you can develop as rapidly as you wish and have the capacity. Not from the point of putting the heat on you to return here if your plans are otherwise. Of course we have all been looking forward to your return and we shall miss you--as a matter of fact we need you here---but I am sure Chicago does to. Or does it mean that you intend to ~~xxxxxx~~ be there a while yet and so have decided to strike up a formal relation and a more active relationship with the branch there. Let me know eh what

Now with regards to the money that you owe me. I of course need the money--it is party money and we need all that we have. If it were not for the incredible interest rate demanded by the loan sharks I would say yes--go ahead and take out a loan from them. In this way I would get the lump sum I need and in this way boy with those guys on your neck if it could be squeezed out of you in any way you would have the dicipline of paying back and adjusting your daily expenditures accordingly thrust upon you. The best situation would be that you disciplined yourself by sending a weekly sum just as you would if you were in the clutches of old Scrouge himself. Now I know how difficult this is--particularly when I am so far away and gant give you the dirty look, haunt you when you go in for that extra beer etc etc. Another way would be to borrow from someone you know the amount you owe me and send it on--this persons presence in Chicago would be a constant pressure on you to pay. If there is such a person I someone who can and is willing to loan you the money I think this would be a good idea. And so much for this dirty business.

I have just been speaking to Pat --he has taken over with Paddy up on the hill there. There are a couple of letters there which they will be bringing in and I will send them on to you at Adams St. Paddy seems to be having increasing trouble with his stomach..as a matter of fact it looks like we will have to substitute someone for the big meeting we are planning on unemployment. Pat phoned me all this while he was telling me how we are taking over at Amalgamated. The local has set up an educational committee which he was elected to and he has also been elected to the district council. Carl Durst is becoming much more active--while the Lockharts appear to be about through.

Boy were you unfortunate in not being here for our election campaign. Our main leaflet--the paper--came off the presses late --we had 4 days to distribute about 30,000 copies and then sudd enly we had the worst snow storm for years which cut every distribution in about half. We had already put out a special leaflet- for Ken in Ward 6 and another for Pete and Joe in Ward 1 and to top it off aided Hugh in Ward 2. Our New Years social was the most successful we have had all year--we even made money at it--it was so good that I even bought liquor. Our financial drive with its $2,000 objective, the biggest yet was a success. We did well here but what really took it over the top was a terrific donation that came from a new source from the work of the last national tour. Cliff was telling me the other day that he is planning to quit the office job he now has sometime the end of April so that he could go on this years tour. We have kept the track and this year we plan on doing a thorough job in the Ontario area all east and west of Toronto and as far north as Cochrane. It was a terrific experience for all those involved in the last one. Pat is a changed man.

We all had the pleasure of meeting our leading British comrade Jerry Healy late in November. He came over for a conference that was held here. Quite a comrade. The group of workers he has around him must be real tough rebels--I am sure they are much similar to the famous Krodstadt sailors that played such an important role in the Russian revolution as sort of shock troops who went in wherever it was tough and men of steel were needed. He spoke to a semi-public meeting we held. Of course I gather you have concluded that he is an ~~Irishm~~ Irish man. He did a real job on a secretiran who we have recently recruited to the branchhere. Cannon was here also. After my report he told us that from all he could see the situation here was the best that it has eve been for ~~xx~~ our movement --that our present group was the best that was ever here since 1928.

Alan passed through here just before Christmas on his way for a prolonged visit over ome. We left him out in Vancouver ~~xxxx~~ to try and keep the things we set off when there sort of rolling on. Which he did , might say. We set up a bookstore when we were there and everyone seems pleased with it--made enough to pay the rent after being in operation two montsh which is much better than we did here. They have an excell nt location. Now they have set up a headquarters--quite a good place according to Alena where they will be holding their meetings and setting up in business. In a recent issue of the BC CCF News the top brass reproduced a vicious article on our English comrades trade union conference--it is really played up with all the scare headlines that appeared in the boss press about the Trotskyist underground etc. They also go out of their way to mention that Healy came over here. I am wondering if they are preapring to move in on us out in BC. Alan put the Vanguard on the map put there. When we arew all four of us there we picked up 400 subscriptions and in the process must have seen about 4 to 5 thoudans workers not to mention several hundred selected leftists. We three three issues in a rowe into the main factory concentrations. Probably got their wind up.

But I must get to other work here. Now drop ms all a note any time you get a chance and let me know your plans too..and let me know about the money--I sent you a note thanking you for the $25 you sent--to your old address- Is it no longer good. I am sending everything to Adams althouhg you know this is not exactly the best.

warmest regards

January 26, 1959

Michael S. Ward
U.S.A.

Dear Comrade Ward;

Sorry to be so long in picking up your very interesting letter and to thank you for your most welcome donation to our financial drive. Your contribution was indeed a significant one--at last we have established reciprocity. For years I have witnessed Canadian readers of our press sending money to help sustain the Militant. Now mind you I am a hundred per cent behind the Militant and not at all a nationalist but I have always felt that it was the chief responsibility of the Canadian socialists to back up the Canadian press. Now for the first time as I say we have established a slight balance.

Of course all of us here who are involved in the job of putting out the Vanguard are pleased with your praiseful letter. We do not get very many. Your opinion about the next step ahead for the Vanguard is generally my own--as soon as we have the resources we will probably make the Vanguard a twice monthly. You no doubt were pleased to read that our financial drive was a success so we may not be too far from this move. Last summer saw us put a fairly good subscription base under the paper through a national tour and this summer we are planning to hold a all-Ontario tour so we will see.

No doubt about it---a genuine farmer-labor party in this country would give great impetus to a first class breakthrough in the United States and open up new horizons for the revolutionary socialists. We are following the developments here very closely and as much as we are able intervening in the processes of history. The next issue of the Vanguard we intend to open up with a series on what the program should be.

I found your comments on the Independent Socialist ticket extremely interesting. We here, while not familiar with all the ins and outs of the work in realizing the ticket thought that it was a great achievement. on the part of the Trotskyists, the SWP. No doubt many mistakes were made in the process of its realization but from here it would seem that a staggering blow was dealt to the Stalinist machine--and they remain our main contestants for the most advanced workers at this stage--it would seem that we have tremendously improved the relationship of forces to our favor for the next upsurge regardless whether we made any immediate recutis to the ranks of revolutionary socialism

Some of the Stalinist dissidents follow the National Guardian up here. We have found that the position of the Guardian towards us, while contradictory re the Democrats etc has aided in an improved relationship with us that these dissidents have with us.

From these and other comments in your letter I would gather that you are a Trotskyist and probably a member of the Socialist Workers Party. I understand that commencing with a recent plenum the SWP in keeping with its great tradition is opening a discussion on the IST experience and the whole regroupment work. We here are tremendously impressed with the SWP, its tradition, the cadre that it has built up over the years. It would be impossible to estimate the role that the SWP has played in the development of our movement here and the same goes for Trotskyism internationaly. There is no doubt much to discuss, much to learn. I myself am confident that the SWP will learn it.

It would be presumptuous on my part to present myself as an authority on these matters but you know--sometimes when far removed from the details of the maneuversm the negotiations, the necessary concessions and so forht you are able to have a more correct view of things.....and as I say the developments around the IST have tremendously impressed all of us here.

Once again thanks for your donation and your good wishes. Anytime you have an opportunity to come up to Canada--for a holiday or otherwise be sure to drop in on us.

with socialist greetings

Ross Dowson

January 26, 1959

Dear Joe; (Johnson)

I am dropping you this line so close on the heels of my previous letter for several reasons--one of them is as you know that about this time of the month I get very busy and am tied up for about the next two weeks. Besides it suddenyl came to me that you may well be without pocket money for cigarettes etc. I am against those cancer sticks but I can imagine they are pretty important to you and the boys under your present circumstances so you will find a money oder made out in your favor for $10.00 in United States funds enclosed with this note within a day or so you should be receiving a parcel that I have sent you--I missed the mail on Saturday, forgot the post office closed at noon so was unable to mail it until this morning. I contains two writing tablets, and a couple of books of the type that you asked for They have been sent stright from the Yonge Street bookstore so I am sure that the authorities will turn them over to you promptly. One of them is a book on biology--the origin of life--and the other is the famous Stacy book on Hegel. Lots of mental exercise & concentration there. I think I also sent a copy of V.G Childe on archeology. All this will be a good antidote to the red hot novels that are probably floating around there. And oh yes--managed to pick up a nice hendy pocket dictionary which would be worth keeping

I received a very nive letter from your mother. She told me that you had contacted them and that they had received a letter from you on the 19th--the day she wrote me. I see from her letter that you are scheduled to be moved to Milwaukee or Madison--that you have probably already been moved to there xxxx I hope that this mail is forwarded promptly. She tells me that she and your father are prepared to do everything in their power for you

bail

I am not suprised that yourbil was raised considerably--in fact to what amounts to impossible proportions. The jurdge is probably motivated by a mistaken belief that you might skip bail. He probably does not know that you were on your way home to give yourself up to the authorities--probably he thinks that you were picked just casullay picked up, and that given the chance you would be off again. I was really quite suprised when you first told me the modest amount that the bail was. Then too of course the charge against you is probably draft evasion. The fact that you are absolutely guiltless is not known to him--it will have to be proven at the court. He doesn know that you had left home long before there could have been any thought about the draft and had had no contact with your home for all the intervening years. Is the bail now $5,000 cash and $10,000 proper or the cash OR the property. It would seem to me if it is $10,000 property that your folks would be able to put it up and if not that it is not at all excluded that we could manage to put it up. I am anticiptating hearing from you on this. You know I have some friends in Milwaukee dont you.

We certainly miss you here. I attended a most interesting discussion last night--John was one of the participants along with Bruce and Raisen. A very good audience--biggest yet. Very stimulating and all more so when I found myself in complete disagreements with the front and in fact the whole audience did also.

Early in the afteroon Cotton amd myself had been around to see various people with considerable success. The same evening while John performed McAlpine and Paul wnt over to see Leslie Morris who was leading a discuss ion on the new party that you will recall the organized labor movement and the CCF are talking about organizing up here. There were about 40 in attendance and Paul said his comments were favorably listened to---he raised the question of proces committees and a referndum.

Wilson will be coming in from Montreal this coming weekend to stay. She wrote me a critical note about Henri but in my opinion it was toonice to him. I am now supposed to be thinking what I have to tell her about Henri who has really and trult learned very little.

Ernie's case should be coming up very shortly. The Gauge published his excellent article and we are in the process of circulating all the locals. It is hard to say what kind of response we will get. But DeHaville will probably carry the Gauge article and some interest was expressed by some of Hugh's friends. Clere is fine. She is here right now --she is due to have here child within the next 10 days or so. The girls held a little shower and hen party for her. McAlpine has picked up the work where you left off and I am hoping that the next week will see him finished with the project. This last week I received a letter both from Adair and from Peter. Adair is going to stay on till March and Peter is right in there. I hope that this note finds you in Milwaukee or Madison or at home out on bail. If I had had any inkling that you would be held so long in Buffalo I would certainly have come across to visit you or have arrenged so that ~~xxxxxxxx~~ someone of us had.

Be sure to drop us a note first opportunity you have. Do not hesitate to ask of me anything that you need--more books, pocket money or what you will. I hope that this note finds you in good spirit and in good health. From the way you describe things there it reminds me very much of my army life--from 1942 to 1945. I was certainly glad to hear that your folk were happy to help you. ll in all the climate seems good in the United States

warmest regards

Ross

February 17, 1959

Vancouver

Dear Ruth;

Glad to see that you made the organizer's post. While it would seem that all of Vancouver is not at all convinced I am convinced that you are the best suited for the job. What is all this about "my own temerity", the branch has the right to recall", about Alan taking over upon his return. It is all absurd. Obviously from the minutes there is a ticklish situation there. But if you live right, as Cannon would say, and of course Ruth with the aid of Reg, Malcolm, Fred, Tom etc I am sure you will do an excellent job. Count me in as one who wants you to make a complete success. I will try to be of as much help as I can

The big thing of course is that the whole situation out there is changing for us. We have a host of new members. Don't one of the minutes read that there were 11 members present and 10 absent-----21 members? The situation has now developed and is further developing that we can have a real regroupment of forces within our own ranks. There is the real possibility of breaking up the old lines that have tied up the branch. While it is true that new persons may come into the branch to some degree committed to this or that person or persons--they above all tend to be committed to the branch itself, to those who do its work --and there are you-right in there as organizer

What is more we are moving out and very much committed to move out. I refer to the headquarters and the store. In my opinion these are real achievements of the past year. Then there are the four hundred subscribers and Charlie's persistant subscrip tion work---and I see Jerry is doing some too. We must make more use of the paper. We must in the next period transform all the negative feelings that I heard expressed about the paper last summer, and collectively try to make it the paper that it must be.

In my own honest , and I hope you wont think it euphoric, opinion we are coming out of the hard times. I didn't say we are out yet--just that we are coming out. The whole objective situation is becoming favorable for us to gather the best of the socialists that a couple of generations have produced in this country to our side--if not in our ranks, sympathetic ,friandly to us. The Stalinists are terribly discreditted, the CCF experience is coming to a close and socialists in the new labor party will be wanting a lead as to how to operate. And here we are -the Trotskyists --as Deutcher said , the only movement with a "systematic and comprehensive critique."

I only hope that I can provide you and the comrades out there the help that you request. We do not have a strong center. Our comrades are young and inexperienced. In fact I am looking forward to things developing in such a way that Vancouver can meet its responsibilities in the building of the center, its experiences, its understanding and its authority. As you know it is very easy to undermine the center, to criticize, to ridicule, to misinterpret---we have had quite a bit of that. Of course we need criticism, clear, sharp, but comradely, positive, and we need help--fraternal relations,etc.

I am of course hesitant about casting opinions on the many matters that appear in the branch minutes. The minutes are sketchy, skeletonal, open to misinterpretation, I therefore think that any correspondence that I have with you should be to a considerable degree be considered to be personal, in of course your capacity of organizer, but personal in that I do not think that they should go to the executive and quoted and become factors in the discussions and disagreements. I would like to chose, with your help, the occassions when I have something to say as national secretary, as the opinion of the center. In the past many matters that I thought I was discussing with this or that comrade or with the NC members have suidenly appeared on the branch floor and have played a role which was quite far from my intentions.

But I would like to feel free to comment from time to time on matters that appear in the minutes and to acquaint you with random thoughts I have which you might consider. Here I go;

I see that the branch has already given a name to the headquarters. Socialist Information Center. Of course we have to have a name. I hope that most of the angles were thought out. For instance Bill is reported as saying I think that it should not be open or available for anything other than our own in the narrowest sense purposes. I have my doubts about this. I can see the possibility of a scare headline about a Protskyist conspiracy that meets clandestinely at a mysterious address, with a phoney name--a place known only to a few. I think we need something that is very legal and open, that becomes known amnogst the left. Somewhile back we had thought about setting up a Vanguard Publishing Association Vancouver office with some comrade clear of the CCF openly identified with the office and the paper. Of course someone is going to have to be identified with the Socialist Information Center. There is a valid purpose for a Vanguard office. What is the purpose of the SIC.? Now of course Ken G might have given us a purpose. I see he is reported as suggesting that a lending library or co-op library be set up. Off hand without hearing any other viewpoints I think that the office has to be open for other pruposes than our own branch meeting, that it has to become known as having some legal reason to be. As I see things from here I am sympathetic to a Vanguard office, where people can pick up the Vanguard, come around and read our filesm borrow from the Vanguard library which is pleased to accept donations to its shelves. But you may well have better ideas. How are we to identify the SIC in the Vanguard?

Everyone is exhilarated by the Forum.. I would gather that there were quite a few persons with whom we had had no previous contact there. What happened to George North, labor journalist.? Too bad we were unable to get an LPPer or some person with a more recent connection with the LPP than Fred or Malcolm. Did Charlie tell you that I sent him a hundred copies of the paper and a letter. The letter suggested that he should raise the matter of our circulating the paper to the right authorities --that traditionally at such forums (the Davies meeting) a display was set up where all tendencies could show their paper. Failing this for some reason we should consider distributing it. I told him I thought that the January issue was perfect for this purpose as it featured a big article on the Gagnon groups document--a matter of fundamental interest for Canadian regroupment. He wrote me a letter the other day. He says---- "I was told not to distribute the paper, So Rod Young had a field to himself with the Labor Party paper. Next time we will use our paper." Send him 200 of the issue-hope we consider distributing the Labor Council.

How are things going with the next forum? What did Young, the Stanley Park group and what do the Stalinists think of the last one? I hope we can get a subject which is more contentious than the last one--where there are diverse views---that may permit Young (if he is inclined) to not snipe at the CCF as much as try to advance his own unique viewpoint. Was there much interest in the Socialism and Democracy pamphlet that we published?

I think that there is some misunderstanding with regards to Jerry's request. First it is not a request from the Toronto branch for the Vancouver addresses. Jerry is a member of the NC. I did not see his letter before it went off and I know that sometimes he is somewhat gauche in expressing himself. Jerry asked me for the address of some

comrade--I think that it was Berching--and I think it had to do with getting some materia from him on China. There is a great debate raging here on the significance of the communes etc. And I had to tell him that I did not know his address. So he said he was going to write for the comrades' addresses. I myself do not see why they should not be available to comrades who want them and have use for them through me. If I am not mistaken Jerry wrote for the addresses in his capacity of corresponding secretary of the NC. You know we made that division because there was some disatisfaction with my correspondence or the lack of it . I think he wrote to Winnie while writing to her about branch minutes as she was branch secretary at the time.

I received a letter from Alan a few weeks ago. Prior to his taking his plane for home I had a talk with him as to his intentions. In this conversation he told me that he really did not want to return to Vancouver but wished to work here. You should know that Alan stayed on in Vancouver when we came East under considerable pressure from myself. Of course we must be acutely sensitive to the wishes of comrades in matters such as this. At anyrate we did not settle anything in this conversation. But as I say I got a letter from him. Alan will do what the party wants him to do. I know that were I to really insist that he return to Vancouver he would go--he is a responsible man and has considerable respect for my judgement. But he made it clear in the letter that he doesn't wish to go to Vancouver. I am afraid Ruth that we should not push him. In part it is this stupid policy of pushing pushing and pushing young and experienced comrades into responsibilities that are not properly theirs and to a considerable degree beyond them. That it could even be in anyones head that Alan will be organizer of the Vancouver branch is astounding. Barry had this same experience. It smaks to me not of giving comrades opportunities to develop but of dumping responsibilities onto others. I am raising this matter to your attention not that I think that this should be flung onto the floor. I think that first we should undercut anyone ideas , and anyones high hopes as to Alan playing some pivotal role in a branch which has plenty of resources of its own. I think that you should subtly prepare the ground for his not coming back to Van. I would appreciate hearing from you as to just how essential he is out there.

In passing I might tell you that Bruce Batten and Bunny may be going out there this summer. Our Montreal experience was terminated at this stage by what almost became a rupture in their relations. The basis of their remaining together was apparently their getting out of Montreal. They are both here in Toronto now, in the thick of things, but they are both talking about starting all over again in Vancouver. I shall not discourage them in anyway. They can contribute much. As you know Bunny is our only graduate from the Southern school.

It is now 20 to twelve and I must away. But one last thing. The deadline for the last issue was January 26. I wrote a letter to Malcolm to that effect at the same time enclosing a copy(one of the only 2 we have) of the Gagnon document telling him that I was counting on him for a contribution to the discussion in his own name. I have not heard from him on this . I am most anxious that he send in a contribution. I have written to him again and am expecting a reply any day. How is he these days? I am hoping that he is able to work on his memories of the arly days of Canadian communism. I have sent him much material that is absolutely replaceable, written him encouragement etc. It is most important that he write up all that he remembers. It would be a tragedy compounded upon a tragedy if he were to slip away from this world without giving us all this material which he alone knows. I hope that you can encourage him

Both yours and Reg contribtions were welcome--they got in because I was holding everything for Malcolm and for a Montrealer who said he was sending in an important contribution. We are trying to get back on our old schedule---so that the paper will get out in the first week of the month,

Incidentally I am suggesting that all NC correspondence should be made available to you.

warmest regards Ross

Hughs Claire had a baby girl - Anna Mary

569 Yonge Street
Toronto
Feb 19, 1959

Dear Comrades Byron and Phyllis

It is a longtime since I have written you. Keep intending to do so but a thousand odds and ends keep getting in the way. Your letters coming this way have been very informative . As a matter of fact I read the last one dealing with developments in the CCF to the Toronto branch. There is little or nothing doing around the CCF these days in the Toronto area. And of course we have quite correctly oriented ourselves in the direction of attmepting to regroup the revolutionary socialists of which there are no in or coming around the CCF. The few layers of workers who are moving are not going to the CCF but tending to move in and around the conferences etc that are preparatory to the new labor party formation. The net r sult is that we have tended to completely ignore the CCF, not just locally but to dismiss it as a national force. Your letter was I feel a useful corrective.

Well have you heard of all the terrific developments in Vancouver. If you havent Ruth will no doubt be writing you shortly. She is now the organizer. The comrades obtained a headquarters just before Alan left to come through here on his way to visit his folks back in England. Last reports we had on the store were quite favorable. The were meeting the rent expesne by November which is quite good for so short a time. I believe they have been successful in circulating quite a bit of our literature and turning up several contacts. The h adquarters is on Granville and from Alan 's distributions is a very good one. Theybare of course using it for the branch meetings which have no doubt taken on a much more serious character and they are now discussing how they are going to make more use of it . I gather that there is a proposal to keep it open several nights a week, to turn it into a center of sorts--possibly open a lending library of radical literuatre. But you will hear more of that. Then of course there is the very successful forum and in my own opinion the first one just scratched the surface. When we were there for the month getting subs, calling on all the pontacts and acquaintances I was tremendously impressed by the number of unattached radicals. Charlie dropped me a line about the forum. Aside from Stanley Park people and ourselves I gather the bulk of the audience some 45 people were not known to him. What impact it has had on the Stalinists I do not know yet. The first leafelt on the foum announced a GeorgeNorth(journalist) as being one of the speakers. Since I did not know this name I took it that he wes possibly an LPPer or a dissident but he was not reported as speaking at the actual forum .

We are all very busy here in Toronto--although there is nothing a phenomenal here with regards to regroupment as in Vancouver. We heard that Edna Ryerson, the last municipal office holder of the LPP, had broken along with her club. She was quite friendly, interested in the document written up by Henri Gagnon but her husband apparently with he acquiesence has now given us the freeze off. We have been trying to contact Carels Sims who has had some connections with the Gagnon group but to no avail. Salsberg and his group haven't made a move in the past five months to our knowledge. Although Salsberg himself recently spoke at a left Zionist groups meeting and apparently took a zionist position on the Jewish question. Our impression is that the LPP is continuing to decline. We have a few of the comrades moving around it. They are holding some study classes. About three across the city--they are in people's homes. The one that one of the comrades attended was composed almost entirely of old infamous

We have a class going here on Staurday afternoons on Marxist economics which is well attended and of course we continue with our weekly Sunday night forums and our once a month social. Tomorrow we will be distributing a special leaflet We have just about finished drawing up for distribution amongst the AVRO workers. They are holding a mass meeting in the ehibition which will probably be attended by about 15,000 people. The line of the trade union brass and the CCF leadership is pitiful. I see Deifenbaker did an effective job on Argue--two years ago Argue called for cease production on the ARROW and spend the money on wheat for the colinial peoplbes--now under the pressure not of the farmers but the AVRO workers he is calling for continuation on the Arrow--more money down the drain. The trade union brass take the same stand, We are switching next Sunday nights meeting up to a hall in West Toronto where the AVRO local udually meets and Paddy and I will be speaking on this matter. The sudden layoff has no doubt shkean a lot of people up Let us hop that a few of them find their way to our meeting

In one of your previous letters I see you sugg st that the Vanguard should put aside a sheet for BC news. When out there last summer I pressed the comrades for material ofr the peper--it is all the more important now that we have well over 400 subscribers in Vancouver. Malcolm was made BC editor--that is he was designated to have all material pass through his hands for editorial work if necessary and to take on the responsibility of making asignments when anything that really must be coversd come up. In the last issue you will not there were tow items from Vancouver which was a big improvement for the peper. We are expecting any day now a special contribution from Malcolm on the Gagnon document which we summarized two issues ago. Malcolm is of course a man who would write on such a development with real authority not only in our eyes but in the eyes of many workers around the LPP and the Gagnon group.

In the same letter you make the very generous offer of a camp site for the Canadian comrades on your property. Have you wrtiten the Vancouver comrades about it. I only wish we were in a postion to take advantage of your offer. A few years ago we actually went to some trouble investigating the possibility of our getting some cheap land on a lake or river within a hundred or so miles of Toronto but it would have cost us considereble money for anything worthwhile and really accessible. You place a hard condition on the camp though Byron and Phyliss. That is this liquor question. Is it the liquor itself or is it the selling it and turning over something over and above its exact cost. Possibly it is no condition at all for Vancouver for I think if I remember correctly that I met considerable resistance out there once to having liquor at a social and seeling it. For better or for worse the working class do drink. Our monthly socials down here are wet--we get a special banquet lisence each time. We never have any trouble. None of our comrades have ever conducted themse ves in any way that was embarassing to us. Unfortunately we dont make any money from our socials these days. We are having to hold them in a public hall and the rent takes up all the profit. We are too big for house socials but not big enough to make a hall social financially profitable. But I suppose we would not be able to hold them in the hall if we did not sell the drinks at a profit--it pays the rent. But when we were smaller and could hold house socials. there was many a an issue of the Vanguard that came off the press paid for from money made selling liquor to comrades. Of course we do not in the full menaing of the word sell them at a profit--we sell the drinks for less than the Yonge Street bars . Workers want liquor at socials and affairs, they expect it--and are pleased that at our socials they can afford it since the price is reasonable. I do not see there is any moral question involved.--cigarettes, coffee, tea If an attempt were made to ban liquor itself from a camp site or from a party it would only result in the rule being broken, in bootlegging, in difficulties. This is of course a common experience--prohibition doesn't stop driking or anything sles for that matter. As for making a little money on it--everyone we have ever been able to attract to our socials throught the

was quite alright, in fact approved of it unless they were hostile to the party and the purspoes they knew we put the added money towards. Many are very happy to know that at the same time as they purchase something they want they are able to help a caouse that they approve of. If we were faced with such conditions here it is probable that we could not take advantage of the offe offer without sooner or later breaking the terms of the agreement. But Vanc couver may even agree. I hope that you will suggest this idea to them is a serious way. After all Vancouver is not so far away--pleasantly away in fact in view of the boat trip.

Rather interesting that you knew Harold Reynolds. Too bad that he never found us here in Toronto. I very seldom even glance at cases like these--the Toronto Star is full of them played up in the most sensational manner. But for some reason I did happen to read one report on his tragic suicide. I noticed that he left a note..I do not recall what it actually said but it attacked persons who were religious hypocrites and said something about there being no justice under this system. From then on I glanced at all the reports and it was obvious that he was xxxx had been a radical of sorts--was class conscious in someway. Really a puty that he did not make contact with us--we may well have helped him, saved him, given him a useful purpose.

That isn't Alan Harris who is fighting the police but Ernie Tate. Alan should be back here any day now. He stayed in Vancouver until just before Chrsitmas then dropped in on us for a few days on his way home to visist his folks in England. I received a letter from his about a month ago. He had just left for London where he planned to spend a full month working full time with our British comrades prior to comeing back early in March. Ernie's appeal will be before the Appeal Courts anyday now. We have meneged to get a little support from several other union locals, nothing like necessary to cover expenses but Ernie has spoken to several of them and got a good reception. Paddy is fine although he broke his arm two Sunday nights ago on his way to chair one of our meetings. He slipped down some icy city stairs and is now in the midst of suing the city for costs etc. And Hugh--well he and his wife Clare have just had a little baby girl who is doing very well. He is doing some very good work in his union local and on the labor council. I would send you a copy of some of the material he is getting printed in the local's paper but unfortunately we do not have any spare copies.

Gald to hear that things are looking so promising for you both in the CCF circles. Send us some subs in when you have the chance. Always looking forward to hearing from you--I guarantee a reply sooner or later.

with socialist greetings

Ross

569 Yonge Street
Toronto
Feb 20, 1959

Dear Angus;

pleased to get your lengthy letter of somewhile back. So it was a long time in coming but how can I complain about your lack of correspondence....since I have not beenxx doing well myself. I am planning to put it on stencil for inclusion in the bulletin we have underway. A couple of the comrades have done some very interesting work on our federal and municipal election data and there are one or two other items of interest. I will remove anything non useful and of course your name etc.

Have you been able to get into Vancouver in the past year. If you havent it will be good for your soul when you are able. Things are the best yet in my opinion---oh of course there are still ots of problems. But big strides forward are being taken and we are on the way to solving some of our problems that have flowed from our isolation and lack of new faces.

The bookstore is I gather doing fairly well. As of November it was paying rent---this is very good for such a short time in operation. It has been turning up the odd person--and of course circulating our material. But we also have a headquarters now. One of the Toronto comrades stayed there almost till Christmas to help things along and I gather from him that it is a very good set up. It is on Granville St, we hold all our branch meetings there, all our files and library are there--right now they are discussing how to make even more use of it--keeping it open a couple of nights a week. A contact has suggested setting up some kind of lending library. I am all for giving it a good legal cover so it cannot be used to compromise the CCF work. The group is grwoing. When we arrived there last summer we found that there had been if I am not mistaken only one recruit in two years. But of course there were a considereble number of persons around upon whom effective work had been done. Since the tour they have recruited four or five new people. You will be interested to know that Tom Bradely is one of them. How is that for a massive contradiction. Whalen makes his final and complete break and Bradely returns. I gather that his contributions have been very good--no bravado, bulldozing but calm expression of opinion--and of course Tom is a man with a tremendous and invaluable experience. Ruth has taken over the job of organizer We left Vancouver after a really conctnrated month of work on the left We sold subs to every one and any one---to the tune of some 400 hundred. We spoke at least three times to Stanley Park and made lots of contributions on the floor. Distributed at least three different issues of the Vanguard on a big scale at all the major shops. Nb doubt the four of us saw several thousand people in that time--working on all the leads the comrades had, picking up new ones--doing door to door subscription work.

And of course we had an opportunity as never before to get to know and understand the problems of the comrades. Missed PR, you, your father and Ray but I think it was worth it. Was impressed that there are really terrific possibilities to regroup the revolutionary socialists around us as long as we play our cards right--dont let the CCF inhibit us too much. Never saw so many unattached radicals in all my life as there are in Vancouver. So I see the first forum was a considerable success. According to Charlie Ross there were about thirty includingourselves and Stanley Park and the other 45 to 50 he did not know. Probably Ruth and Lill new some of them but it would appear that we made contact with new elements. A George North who I took to be an ex or current LPP was booked to speak but I havent heard what happened to him. Nor have I heard what impact

the meeting had on the LPP and dissidents. The next one is underway and with our having wet our feet with fair success I am looking for a real wizz-bang ..a better more contentious, related to regroupment subject---wider participation--hope we can get someone of more recent connections with the LPP than Fred and Malcolm., if not force the LPP itself to come across.

Do you ever write to Vancouver. It would be very good if you could take a few minutes to encourage them on the forum. I know you dont have any money but xxxxxxx none of us have and possibly you could slip them a few bucks. It would be very good all around if Ruth as organizer heard from you. in the next mail or so.

Nothing so phenomenal as all this happening in the Tornnto area. We are going about our business. Recruiting, making general propaganda with the paper, forums, dances. Right now we are concentrating on a sub renewal and contact drive Not getting very far on regroupment, at anyrate not apparently right now. Salsberg and company are not moving at all and as time goes on it looks like some of them may never ever again. Heard that Edna Ryerson, their last member of municipal office quite recently along with her club. We have managed to contact herxx Was apparently very friendly, interested in the Gagnon developments but now we are getting the freeze from her husband and no doubt with her aquiesence if not agreement. Have been trying to make contact with Sims but have failed despite all efforts. Have xxx kept a few fingers in the CCF but no one is really interested in it any more. What interest there is is in the projected labor party. There is to be a big conference of trade unionists here in the end of the month and we will be there with bells on of course. We have a few comrades around the LPP. But they are in hellish shape, appear to be down to the rock bottom really hard core. They are holding three study classes across the city...apparently interest was so small that they are being held in private homes. One of the comrades is attending and the core of this class was old battle horses like Annie Buller, Kashtan, Freed. They hold a public forum once a month and we do xxxxxxxxxxas good on a weekly basis. I think the last one had about 40 in attendance.

We dont meet the Stalinists in the union movement at all these days---at the labor council. Of course they have their groups in the UE xxxx but in the one shop that we are in under UE they lost what they had that was actually in the shop-maintaining their influence from the staff. Of course they are tending to go along with the brass-quite uncriticelly. We have several comrades delegates to the labor council. Dont have any concnetration in any one shop---We have made gains in that direction but lay-offs are always hitting us as the comrades are young and without seniority. The comrades in the council have developed some prestige amongst the few militants that are delegates. Hugh who is quite vocal has considerable support in his local and amongst UAW delegates generally. Hugh's main support in the local is amongst the PAC activists. One of them was on the verge of joining us--was a very good financial and political supporter but he had to return to England. Another, an excellent worker militant would be with us if we were a little large and able to play a broader role in the unions. I am enclosing a copy of the latest issue of their paper. We write the PAC column. Might be ussful to the Pulp and Sulphite paper. Our caucus in General Steelwares was very promising until wide and long layoffs hit it. The running of two of the comrades as SEL candidates to the suprise of one of the caucus raised their status in the local. We had the PAC there

No real motion in the Toronto area locals. There is a loosening up. xxx We could probably move up the wrungs but we have generally agreed not to but to move out more with our political ideas.

What do you hear from Powell River. Geroge Smith, the chap who had been president of the local and others. We just received a request from the local for a list of books--from Biasutti.

Hope you and Ray are keeping up with the ISR, Labor Review, the Militant. What do you think of the Vanguard these days. Could use the odd item you might think of value.

fraternally

Ross

Joseph Johnson
Madison, Wisc

February 26, 1959

Dear Joe

I am sure that you would have liked to have been here today. Some of the boys went down to the ahibition. There was a big meeting to discuss what is going to happ en to the men and women who used to work in the big aircraft industry at Malton--over 13,800 were fired last Friday with the cessation of production of the ARROW. Imagine the stunning effect of this layoff--nothing in sight--just doubled the number of unemployed in the Toronto area with a snap of Deifenbakers finger. I spent some little time to draw up a brochure on what it was all about. The top brass were all in a flurry, the brochure was quite interesting to everyone as the brass had nothing to sell that was really worth buying. They tried to stop us and called for official aid. But Pat went about his business and they just did not know what to do. He just called their bluff--they turned to one another, Argued and left. It will be interesting to see how we make out this Sunday as we had an ad in the brochure

Glad you liked the books. I have since glanced into the Origin of Life and I see that it is even more important and valuable that I thought--in fact I must read it myself. I thought that it was just a general scientific work on an interesting and important work but I see the author approaches the whole matter in our way. Did you get the small bundle of paperbacks that John and Ken sent. Now I dont know whether to send you anything more and what to send you. ~~Incidentally~~ Probably your case has come before the courts a d you will be facing new circumstances. I am wondering if you would perhaps like a subscription to the New York Times weekly. I know that local US papers are of a very poor standard. Probably the weekly would be up your alley. And can you get such papers as I am most prone to send you. Let me know all about this. Sorry about the dictionary. I will send you another one when you tell me what other books you want and your general circumstances

You will write me at once as soon as your case is heraled. I think you should also consider the possibility of an appeal. I am sure your attorney would know if it would be worthwhile. Three years is one hell of a sentence. ~~Incidentally~~ Terrible for anyone but worse for us as there is so much to do. I gather that your folks are really behind you. If they have the money I myself would not hesitate to use it. It can always be paid back-money is nothing --but three years can never be recovered. I am not here thinking of the human spirit as many do on these matters. For me the whole thing is like a prison. the whole situation both inside and out is a prison--but out we can do something about it. Of course if an appeal would be of no value-so be it. How does it go....."Freedom is consciousness if necessity." A profound comment. You should carve it on the wall in front of you As you know we do not have any money but if money can in anyway help and you cannot get it elsewhere let me know so that we can at least see what can be done.

Glad to see you have things down to a system. Is this your devisal within their framework and is it the one imposed on you. It sounds very good to me. Very important so that you do not become demoralized. I am sure that Blanqui worked out such a regimen. Not too different from my stay in the army which I recall was for three years. It was about the only time in my life that was able to do some rounded and concentrated reading...studying. Yes it sounds almost identical to army life. Only I never expected to live through to it. The entire platoon that I took my advanced and basic trainig with got killed in the Sicilian campaign and of course after the many courses I expected to get shipped over and probably not return--except perhaps as the unknown soldier eh. It is suprising how when one knows and fully understands that the situation has to be ~~thus~~ the mind adjusts to it--not adapt-- for I remained unconqered right to the end--but adjusts and gets all that is worthwhile from the situation. Yes, by all means inscribe FREEDOM IS CONSCIOUSNESS OF NECESSITY on the wall

I doubt that I have any~~one~~ one I could look up in Madison. I assume that you will

ot be staying there much longer or I would write and find out. If you are staying there or a period or as soon as you move to some place where it is resonable to think you will be staying for a while let me know. I am sure you would appreciate a visitor with whom you could talk other matters with.

You were so right on Ken's project. He took his copy over to Claire to have it typed up. Problem is even bigger than you presented it. Sentences often dont even follow--it doesn't develop from point to point. Doesn't pose a problem and using the data answer it. So the whole thing has been delayed. I have spent a couple of afternoons with him and we have quite a bit of copy ready to be typed up. What we have done has been quite interesting. Unfortunately I have not been able to put aside much time and now Ken himself will be away for a week or so. He is going down to Montreal and will possibly be dropping into some friends in Kingston and Ottawa. He has received an invitation to the McGill Cmapus---actually we received it , only he and I are available and I am not really as it will take several days for us to get our moneys worth out of it. I think Ken can do a satsi factory job for the students. Nothing new on Gagnon. His ?.i.e. has put out a little item but it is pretty much just a wisecrack. As I was telling Ken just a short while ago. I dont think there is much there. They suffer from ouvrierism. They were once carried by a nationa movement with a line, roots connections etc. Gagonon has none of these . I doubt that he is capable of reorienting himself. Unfortunately there is no regroupment down there either --not only not us now but no other forces which would stimulate them.

Business is good in Vancouver. Regroupment is underway. We had 75 to 80. Moral is very high. Havent heard anything recently about the store so I gather that everything is moving along not too badly in this field. The office is still standing. They have problems--but mostly good. The odd sub keeps coming in along with two contributions to the last paper.

Waiting just agreed in a panel so that differing viewpoints don't really matters so much. The horror of it all there were no differing viewpoints---they all agreed. In Johns case understandable--hero worship. What does he know about the disputes back in 1924 and the economy in order to apply it to the great event of 1948 and today. As a matter of fact we have had several very interesting differences in the past month or so since the return from Montreal. But business is good and growing. Tonight I must go over to see Rose and Murray. I am uninvited but they are holding a party which is of particular interest to me...the SLI was also uninvited but I sent them along a notivee that I happened to come across.

You will have to pardon the disjointed character of this note--I have had many interuptions--but she is off before I have to really get down to work. Drop us a line any chance you get. You know that I will answer sooner or later. And dont forget to ask anything of me that require

fraternally

Ross Dowson

(Undated, found in R & R Bullock, Feb ? (1959) to May (Est: July and September)

All we have heard from the West Coast is a nice letter from Mrs VanHorne at Coombs, that chap Bates on the Island that we were so impressed by, and a letter from Rodney Young no less, in reply to our note asking him to put us on his exchange list. When I get a chance I will get ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ copies typed up for you although there is really nothing of importance in them. Mentioning Rod Young---I was somewhat suprised to see Winnifred's contribution after the experience we had with Malcolms.

We have all been very busy lately--causing me much embarassment over my failure so far to get that bulletin out. Our youth group is finally getting off the ground. Last night to their panel on the colonial revolution they attracted 30 young people of all views and tendencies but the Stalinists Next week they have Salsberg lined up to speak and I am sure it will be even more of a success. We have four comrades immediately involved but of course we have all been compelled to pitch in from behind the scenes to make it a success. Helping comrades prepare their speeches, doing some of the mechanical work to popularize the meetings and it lookslike we will have to give them some financial aid. But all in all it is a promising situation. --the most promising we have right now.

Then we did quite a job on the unemployed meeting called here a week ago Wednesday by the labor council on unemployment. We put out a special leaflet--sent a copy to Lillian-- and our comrades did the best they could to put forward the demandsfor organization of the unemployed and a struggle for the shorter work week. We took over the floor after the brass had limited the meeting to electoral action. Nothing of what we had to say got into the papers but there is the enclosed picture of Paddy---very good don't you think. He got the biggest hand of anyone. We carried the ball much to the embarassment of both the CCF and the Stalinists. The Stalinists very ineffectually carried the ball for increased foreign trade. The CCF brass had the platform on political action. Several trade unionists commented on the job our comrades did. I tell you it was good to be the old man--to be sitting back for a change watching events and see (of the 15 persons trying to get the mike) our comrades mostly young and inexperienced at least [redacted] them adequately our views.

Then we are holding a class on journalism which has been so successful and roused so much interest in the comrades that every comrade in the branch is attempting to write for the paper--with the result-the painful process of going over the material with each and every comrade is taking up twice as much time as if I wrote the meerial myself--did I say twice--rather three and four times.

But right now there is a matter which I would appreciate your taking up with the NC members out there---the matter of the coming federal elections. Time is short. In the last minutes which you should receive any day you will note that I made a notice of motion that we discuss this matter--and

stated my own opinion that we should run one candidate, if necessary in against a CCF candidate.

I think that more than ever we can run a candidate in a riding where the CCF will be running a candidate without clouding over our fundamental position of support of the CCF nationally and for a CCF government in Ottawa.

Did you read todays paper. Not enough that Coldwell should praise Pearson but this morning he is quoted as wishing that speaker Michener should be re-elected from St Paul--the riding which the bookstore is in.. and where one would assume the CCF is going to run a candidate. The whole atmosphere here is that the CCF is going to run just a token campaign in the Toronto area. At the Toronto area Rec the CCF and TU brass carried the line of concentration of forces--in 5 of the 17 Toronto ridings---and it tends to boil down to two--Dovercourt and South York. We fought against this--Hugh got the DeHavilland local to oppose it and we gather that two of the constituency organizations, that will be on the dirty end of the stick as they will be getting practically no aid in their campaigns from the unions, have protested.

It seems that there will be candidates placed in all ridings but they are going to be token ones and everyone is going to know that. Of course it is possible in the light of this situation that they may have difficulty getting candidates in some of the ridings. For instance Margot Thompson wont swallow Coldwell's built up for Michener and run as she has in the past in St Paul's. If they are unable to field candidates in certain ridings then of course it would be just a matter of course that we would contest one of these or even more depending on our financial situation. But if it was ever possible for a Marxist current to run a candidate in a riding where a CCFer is campaigning and yet support the CCF nationally it seems to me to be now...when it is quite publicly known that the CCF campaign in such a riding is just a token one.

I think [redacted] I know we could make our case quite well...issue a public appeal to the CCF to leave this seat open to us--one where they havent a ghost of a chance of getting in and there are some good working class areas [redacted]---we can make a good case, as no doubt when we ran a mayoralty or B of C candidate, we polled more than they did federally. We could spread this appeal far and wide. We could make our case on the need to voice an alternative policy for the CCF--Irvine's appeal to break from NATO--Douglas's warning that an arms drive will lead to the police state--the very thing we [redacted] are supposed to be [redacted] defeat. While it is true we would get little national piblicity--although the radicals across the country would know about it---we could do a very thorough political job in one Toronto riding--perhaps three leafelts--sub work canvassing etc etc.

My own opinion is that we should not run me this time. We have a couple of comrades who could handle the type of campaign this would be. There will probably be no public meetings where we could speak other than a couple that we might decide to hold. The campaign will primarily be a literary one and lots of contact work. This will give us an opportunity to start to build another public figure.

Let us know what you think of the above proposition just as soon as you can. As I say, Wednesday we will be discussing the matter, but wont make any decision of course but will be making a recommendation in all probability.

Will be sending you a detailed report of the recent southern plenum. Paddy went down and we got our student in the camp to come in. Our student seems to be doing very well.

warmest regards,

Ross

March 24, 1959
569 Yonge Street
Toronto, Ont.

Joseph D. Johnson
Box No. P.M.B. 6803 P.C.
Springfield, Missouri

Dear Joe;

Yesterday I received a very nice letter from your mother and father telling me of the last letter that they received from you and giving me your new address. They also wrote out a few quotations from ~~xxxxxwhat~~ I take is your first letter to them. Well I see that you are by no means in the worst place in America. From a couple of quotations I would think that this center is of such a character that you may even be given something to do that may be of interest. This is my first note since you were sentenced. We are certainly relelved to hear that you got what I would suppose is about the minimum sentence. It would be interesting to know all that they did to have such copious files on you. Two years is a long time when you project your thoughts forward and much can happen which I know you would be anxious to be part of, however it can pass quickly as I well know from personal experience and when you look back it seems to have been nothing at all. You know I spent three years in the army. True I was not quite as restricted as you will be ~~xxxxxxxx~~ But I was deprived of almost any and all opportunities to do what I really wanted to do--and of course I did not have nearly much intellecutal freedom as you will have -you will note the difference in typewrite here--I was down stairs typing the previous remarks until Pat's comments on many things of interest caused me to concluded that I must come upstai if I want to get this letter away and to have much coherence.
--yes-to get back to my own experience. I suppose one of the biggest pro leme is the lack of female company and while we had the week-ends about twice a month to overcome this it did little for me this way as this type of female association formed on an odd week-end is repugnant to me. I bec adjusted to it ---and is no doubt one of the biggest reasons why I am still a bachelor. You will certainly not be more restricted in activity otherwise than what I was in the army. I did a lot of reading of the type that is worthwhile but which I would never do if other really more import ant material was accessible. This has its good points as you tend to inevitably to broaden your outlook not that yours isn't plenty broad alrea But then you can make its breadth more profound. Perhaps one of the reasc why my three year stint passed so quickly was that I had no idea up until the very end how long I was going to be in. Perhaps you should cultivate the idea of not counting off the days, not counting off the weeks-not anticipating the two years to come day bytday. ~~CHCMCMCHCMCMCMCMCMCHCMCHCMCH

Now as to the fine. uite a sieable amount in light of the two year sentence. What if you do not have the money--do theygive you another 6 or 9 months? There have been a few objections about this buying your way out of jail and in some places they let you out and make arrangments so that you pay the fine on easy instalments. What is the score on this. Should we not be investigating the possibility ofxxxxixxx raising the fine now. Five hundred dollars is a lot of money. Do your folks have anything like that--or given two years are they in a position to get it. I would like very much to know and I think it would be quite proper of you to raise it with them-although I am inclined to believe from their letters t at they have already more than promised to do this much for you. If there is some difficulty there I think we should see what can be done from here.

No doubt this will be the first letter you will have received from this point for a long time. I told everyone I know to hold off until we got some kind of word such as your folks letter yesterday. Some extremely important developments have been taking place in Eastern Canada lately. A remarkable strike has taken place in Newfoundland and the premier there is conducting himself in such a way that the prime minister in Ottawa refused to send RCMPer he requested as there was danger of discreditting the RCMP as an anti-union force. He even went so far as to castigate the Liberal premier for using the RCMP to break a strike. The loggers union has been decertified and the premie even went so far as to set up a counter union under his auspices. The presbyte Prebyterian minister at Grand Falls evan called for revenge following the deat of a constable in a fracas. The Toronto Star reporters who were there and gav an accurate report of the fracas have been forced to leave the town by mobs whipped up by the premier's attacks. Some people put out a leaflet urging a sympathy demonstration across the country--but Murray Coterill of Steel told them off proper. Then there is the large layoff of all the workers employed in manufacturing the ARROW aircraft....some 13,800 directly and an estimated 45,000 counting feeder plants. You might think that Mr Donald MacDonald would have called for national ownership and production of refrigerators or something else...but he didn't. Neither Mr MacDonald, Mr Pearson nor the prime minister had anything to say but get tangled up. This doubled the numbe of unemployed in the Toronto area in one swoop. But you can be sure that Mr Stanton and others had lots to say in their paper and in a leaflet there too. A special issue of the paper came out on discussion with Montreal. Montreal's document shows that they have learned very very little--in fact if they don't smarten up they wont be able to stand up against the competion of Stanley Ryerson. Possibly the paper with a few short contributions will smarten them up a little. Everything is moving smoothly out West--you remember that fellow from Borden--he is out there and is a real house of fire. We are getting ready for our summer holiday--Cliff is learning to drive-John is putting some money away-Pat is all anxious to get off but we wont be going until late in May as it is cold in this area until then

I am looking forward to hearing from you, particularly to hear what books you would like whetehr you are getting or able to get the New York Times even if only the weekly edition etc. I gather from your folks letter this note will find you in good health ,both mentally and physically. Remember that slogen that you are going to engrave on the wall. Lots more have had the same experience--in fact it is suprising -just about anybody of importance. That is one thing that my old man used to hold against me--what did I know he used to say --why you havent even been in jail yet.

warmest regards

Ross

Joe Johnson (Matthews)

569 Yonge Street
Toronto, Canada
March 25,1959

Dear George and Mildred Johnson;

Thank you very much for your very nice letter.

Yes, I have been anticipating receiving Joe' address. Last night I sat down and sent him a typed letter both sides of an 8½ X 11 page. I know that at one place he was restricted to one peice of paper written on both sides--but it was never clear to me whether this rule applied to him or to those writing him. At anyrate this may well be the longest letter he can receive. I will be looking forward to hear from you as to whether he received it or not. You can be sure I will continue to write him whether he can send letters to anyone other than you or not.

Thanks for the few quotations from his letter. I will pass this information around to his many friends here. They will be pleased to know that his circumstances are not too bad all in all. I was glad to hear that he got what must have been the minimum. sentence. Next time you have occassion to write I would be interested to know what the $500 fine means, Does this mean that non payment of the fine would stretch his sentence another 6 or so mohths. Do they have a method where persons fined are ~~fixxx~~ released and then given so much time to make payment?

I am hoping that Joe is in such a jail that there are the facilities available for him to make use of his time.---that they possibly have a library or other facilities where his abilities will be given some latitude and thereby make his stay not so tedious and oppressive. I am hoping also that he will be able to receive periodicals such as the New York Times weekly edition. Then he would be able to keep in contact with all the events that interest him so much.

Anytime you think that I can help in anyway I know you will call on me

fraternally

Ross Dowson

April 19, 1959

Dear Gerry;

It was certainly good to receive that batch of subs that you and Charlie pulled in on the Island. I always knew that it was the stronghold of the BC CCF left for many years and we did pretty good ourselves over these two years ago but it looks like you beat us. Gald to hear that you got the papers alright at Victoria. You got all we had--we never or very seldom have anything like the number you wanted so late on in the month. If we even had the number you wanted that airmail express would have posed a real problem for us. I always knew that the Vanguard was worth its weight in gold but I hate to have to pay that to the express company. As it was as you probably noticed the msall bundle you received cost $4.00. Too bad we did not have a better issue of the Vanguard for your for the Island sub work. For instance this issue is made to order. Of course we will have to make special eefort to see that every issue is good for BC, that we always have something of interest of developments of importance. I have already send you five hundred copies of the latest issue for I think what with the material on Bill 43 and the forum it is a particularly good one for you. Hope you cna put them to good use.

What are you going to do with the little black book with the lists. Ihope that you were able to decipher it. If I remember it is not in very good shape. I am wonder ing if it would not be a good idea to mail it back so Jerry could go over it, tran slate some of his markings and then send it back to you. It would be good if it were in perfect condition for the next time that you went over. Buruce and Bunny Batten possibly Ruth told you, are heading Vancouver way. As a matter of fact just a few weeks previous to your announcement we were talking about their taking a holiday on the island upon arriving in BC. They are hoping to leave here by june and July at the very latest --so there is your fouresome if there are no other comrades or friends able to go.

And while I am at it--Pat has just interuppted me to get my opinion on what some of the cards mean. It would be a good idea just before you send the sub cards on if you would go through them to make sure we will have no difficulty in deciphering them at this end.

Well I certainly hope Gerry that you are not compelled to leave Vancouver. Now that you have become well acquainted with our Vancouver comrades and the general political situation out there you can appreciate the very great opp ortunites there are and the considerable contribution you can make there---indeed have already made there. I would hate like hell to see you buried in Brandon or some similiar place. You need some one to work with--it is very diffucult for anyone no matter his abilities and enthusiasm to do effective work on his own. And in Vancouver noto only do you have a gomup of comrades to work with but you yourself provide a great deal in mbolizing them for morepurposeful work. As you know many of the comrades there are not so young as they used to be and have families and other obligations that restruct their maneuverability. I am sure you have been a real inspiration to them all. When out there last summer and for the first time staying there for almost a month and getting around a bit I came to the comclusion that the possibilities for the growth of ourmovement are more favorable there right now than anywheres in the country.

We need to develop some organizational forms that will allow us to take adv antage of the situation. And I gather we are discussing this matter now. But there are a great many unattached radicals in the Vancouver area. The Stalinists and the CCF are more strongly rooted in the working class. On top of that Vancouver is in reality the whole province.

You refer to a national tour. As a matter of fact we had a preliminary meeting this morning of some of the comrades mostlikely to be going on tour--an we had the truck up to a fellow who is a mechanic and some what friendly to us. But it is not going to be a national tour this time. The national tours cost us a lot of money to take every year. The big problem is gas and oil. What we are planning this year is an all Ontario tour. We are intending to do a real job which we have never done before. Before heading West last year the comrades went into Westenr Ontario and skimmed through the North. Not at all adequate to the possibilities. For as you know this is the most highly industrialized and developed part of Canada, and besides when we hit some good types we can reasonably hope to deepen our contact by the odd ivist. It is very difficult to do anything with anyone in Winnipeg or Edmonton areas. Sooner or later we are going to have to colonize with some of our most developed and devoted comrades capable of working on their own in such centers. We have already established some good contact in Western Ontario but we need to deepen it. We plan to go west as far as Sault Ste Marie and north as far as Cochrane. We also intend to go east as far as Cornwall--by then you start to hit the languarge problem.

I have got a couple of consignments that I must get after right away in time for the tour---one a short pamphlet published by the SEL on the labor party question or unemployment--the other an article in the ISR Summer issue on Cdn US relations. We are hoping to get a strat in Hamilton where we have never done any deep work by May 15th. The comrades plan to go in there and stay two weeks right off then come bake and pick up a comrade who wont be able to quit his job until May 31st. We have a few good leads in Hamilton--in fact a CCF leftist who we were working on was elected last winter as an alderman. I was glad to see him drop in on the store lastnight for a discussion on some of the problems confronting him. The CCF is holdingup his card and on top of that he has found by his own experience that the LPP with its butteringup to the trade union brass is of little help to him. He has some oppo rtunist tendencies but if we were able to pick up somehting else in the city we could possibly stradthen him up. I raised the idea of him pressing the council to come out for a ban on the H bomb tests--they have justopened up an atomic reactor at the university there---we quote the mad professors there in the latest issue of the paper.

Has the New World Booksstore got the Cannon Notebooks of an Agitator yet. We are really going to concentrate on selling this book on the tour. We are already doing well in the store with it. Hope you have been able to do some studying sometime in the midst of all the activity you have been involved in. The last issue of the ISR was certainly a valuable on--particularly Warde's essay titled Socialism and Humanism. And have you been able to do some real contact work. We have a passing contact it seems to me in the Vancouver area with all kinds of people--some of them appearing to be extremely close to us-good types. But the comrades involved in many other matters have not had the time to really get around to see these people and find out what makes them tick, sell them literature and so forth . Besides dupth of our concentration and commitments to the CCF heretofore has prevente us from seriously coming to grips with this work. I guess the bookstore has lots of literature that we can take around.

Sometime very soon I would apreciate it if you would give me an impression of the work you have done in the unemployed movement. It is certain to beocme a more important arena of activity and it is a longlong time that we have been away from it. Were you able to establish any good contact. Why are the Stalinists opposing the actual formation of an organization. Is there any possiblity of working through the trade union ovement

thr ugh the Boilermakers Union for instance. I suppose you have been reading about the work of our Detroit comra es in the UAW--Fox is a leading comrdee ofours. There is no unemployed movement of any type here. In the March issue we reported a meeting that the Stalinists called on unemployment through a couple of locals they have influence in. Attenadnace was pretty well limited to party people. But interestingly enough we were albe to blow their caucus apart--our motion for nationalization of AVRO swept up the support of the audience despite all the efforts of the chairman their best know unioniat in the Toronto area to defeat it.

The most interesting development here in the last few weeks was the highly success ful trade unionmilitants conference we held last Sunday. The Stalinists were compelled to go along with it--their mister big put hisname amongst the sponsors--but they boycotted it. Nonetheless it was highly successful. I will be writing the organizer a report in the next day or so --so will leave it at that.

As I said--here is hoping you get a job and are able to stay in Vancouver. Bunny and Bruce will be a real addition to the work out there when they arrive. Good to hear from you and about you. The comrades were really inspired by the pile of subs you and charlie sent in.

warmest regards

Ross Dowson

April 22, 1959
569 Yonge Street
Toronto, Ont. Canada

oseph D Johnson
ear Joe

How did you know. I received your letter of the 19th compl ining of my failure to rite you, as well you s ight, when I w s finally getting around to do so. Good to hear rom you again. As a matter of fact it was pleasant to find that all I had to do waswalk ut into the store and answer the first small request you have mace. In a mail or so ou will be receiving a book--a dictionary of spoken Spanish--we h d it in stock. Drop me line if you want a grammar too. I am sure Cole's have them. Yes Spanish is best --here it would be French--I have alwayslooked forward to really learning it.

Now there are some matters that I would like information on--how often can I write ou and how long can the letters be.? Can I send you any books, do you want any, an d of hat kind since you mention that book by Fe ix Morrow being in the library? You say ou have subscribed to the N Y Times and that you had to do so with your own money. Do ou have any money, would you like me to send you some? You say that you could possibly et a labor paper. I will write to a paper called MESA right away and have them send it o you

I have written to a friend in the US with regards to details for parole. October25 s no time at all. Havent heard anything yet but it would seem quitepossible for us to rrange something along the line you suggest. The way they have you working --a seven day eek, and your extra-curricular activites time must be passing quite quickly. Glad to ear that you are meeting the odd interesting fellow. I would be interested in hearing from nd helping any you make friends of. Give them my a dress.

We are in a but of a rush right now. Getting the truck into good working order--and nleased to find from a new mechanic friend that it is generally so. Four of us are going n an extended vacation--a preliminary jaunt for about 15 days to Hamilton, then away for and possibly five m nths right through Ontario. But not past Cochrane. That gives us ots of territory-from Cornwall to Windsor to Saulte Ste Marie-Cochrane-into Rouyn-oranda. John is enthusaistic. Right now they are making preparations and as you canim gine they are quite elaborate. We hope that the stays and the connections will be deep - than last time. It will be interesting to find out just what impact a years reading nd of course thinking has had on people that were seen last year. What with developments n Montreal we have been carrying e ucational material f r the past sev r al issues with egards to orientation, international, national and nature of progr m. It will be interesting to see what impact this has had. We have gone further than before for u fortunately Montreal has gone and formally announced f rmation of a national group. The joke s they are no more in aposition to do this than fly--and in their case it probably oesn't mean as much as it would with more mature and experienced forces--but none the ess it has forced the question in advance of the general situation. Montreal shows antastic evidence of immaturity--they think that they and not Tim will get the inside track. n their opinion everything is more or less ok except here in Canada. Once Tim starts o m ove in there I dont see how they will survive.

Remember Jerry from Borden? He has taken a trip to Vancouver and is doing very well here. He and a friend took a jaunt over to Vancouver Island and send us a wholepile f connections. Things have opened up there considerably. In fact they are on the verge f having to set up something like we did here a few years ago. The store is still going nd they also have an office. Things are grwoing--in fact m re favirably than here right ow--I always knew that there was actually a more favoarble situation than here--many ore unattached persons than here. He writes me about attending a forum which has held hree sessions so far--all quite successful--and which finally a friend of Tim was compelled to appear on. All quite a change since you last heard of thing wh-what!

There is going to be a series of elections here shortly. The results will be interesting to watch. In Manitboa I am quite sure that the Progressive Conservatives are going o sweep the slate clean. Stories are that they are even cutting in on the Liberal and he CCF machines. They may well be one in BC shortly. SC has passed some restrictuve legislation on Jodoin which if properly handled could do things for the new formation owever it is highly doubtful- possibly Diefenbaker will go places there too.

Then it is rumoured there will be elections in Ontario. If nominations mean anything Bryden isn't going anywhere here--hadyl know a name--all the old faithfuls are not flocking in so they must figure there isn't going to be a faovirable result. Interesting developments in Quebec. Everybody outside of Duplessis has put their name to what might become a broad coalition against the old man. The effect on Erden and on Montrealers will be interesting to note--this is very tempting for them.

Never see Life so I did not see the article that you refer to. But saw an excellent book by Camon, Sort of Notebooks. Got a good review in both the New Statesman and Nation and in the Tribune---it was published in England. Big developments over there --they have had to do the same thing that we had to do several years ago. Big actions have been taken against them but this time they have won considerable support, from councillors, and others. Alan spent his Christmas over there and a full month holiday in the thick of things in London.

Practically everyone is working here. Lots of unemployment however. The work force has gone down probably because of many women leaving it. UIC figures are about 725 thousand which is considered quite alright as it looked like it was going to go on and up. So now they say that we have come out of the slump. Probably worse than most places here in Canada. Nothing has happened at the AVRO plant yet--which you will recall let out some 11 or 12 thousand several months ago. The Liberals have raised the matter of Elliott Lake--uranium--which as not contacts after 1960 . Big developments up there involving many thousands, all contracts are American and there have been some large concentrations of uranium found in the US. Did you know hear that the Queen is coming over to Canada to open the Seaway. They gave the tour route here in Toronto in the paper this morning. Scott Meisener Steamships have given notice to all their sailors--it seems that most of their great lakes boats wont be able to meet the competition of ocean going boats now able to come right up into North America. Oh well the race goes to the swiftest. Iron ore is going to go into Pittsburgh from Ungava real cheap. The government is trying to remedy some of the situation by giving bigger grants to Nova Scotia steel interests--it is also subsidizing Alberta coal which will be going to Japan to be used along with Vancouver Island iron ore to make Japanese steel. Then too southern Canada is in the heaviest fall-out area. There is quite a debate going on just how much we can take. The latest development is that they are raising the danger mark up much higher. David Lewis gave a terrific speech the other day to some business men to the effect that they had to give their support to him because of Tim---but Tim never had it so bad--can't find him. And so it goes from the outside

looking forward to your next letter and your answers to the questions.

warmest regards

Ross

April 23, 1959

Mesa--
1974 National Bank Building
Detroit 26, Michigan

Dear Sirs and Brothers;

Enclosed please find a dollar bill. Would you be so good as to send a copy of your very fine paper to an acquaintance ofmine who is at present in penitentiary in Missouri--a class war prisoner of sorts. Several years ago when he was quite young and inexperienced he evaded the draft call to Korea and has only recently been picked up and sentenced. He is permitted to understand union papers. He will be there until November at least and I am sure he would appreciate reading MESA. I do not know your rates but this amount should cover a subscription until at least that time. Would you start with your last issue.

We always find your paper stimulating

fraternally

Rose Dowson

April 29, 1959

Patterson, Montreal

Dear Mike;

We havent heard yet from you folks down there as to whether or not you are agreeable to switching speakers with us on May Day. We sent a note to Gerni some while back and have had no reply. We are holding our May Day rally on Sunday night May 3rd--and that is not very far away. If you are holding a May Day meeting on the same night and the proposition is an agreeable one wire us a reply, otherwise just let us know why not in the course of your next letter.

Hope you got our night letter addressed to the founding convention of the Socialist Party of Canada. We got your press release alright and will be carrying part of it in the Mid-May issue of Vanguard. Too bad you went through with that name as there is still a remanent of the SP of C of earlier days around the place--particularly in the West. I dont suppose they will take you to the highest courts of the land or sue you for all your assets but imagine the confusion you will be creating for future histoirans of this period. But in a more serious vein--the SP of C label is part of the Marxist but sectarian, fundamentalist, pre-Russian Revolution- pre Leninist past of the Canadian socialist movement. Something one doesn't particularly want to be identified with. When I was in Vancouver last year I attended a meeting that they held for an English delegate who had just attended a convention they had held in the US. There were about 70 or 80 persons in attendance...so you can see they are from the point of view of numbers and being known they are not exactly of no consequence even today. Of course they aren't going anywhere. Part of the BC CCF left comes from the SP of C.

We are very sorry that none of us could attend the convention. I would have particularly liked to have heard and possibly discussed with you comrades the nature of the class struggle program that Marxists must develop. We started to deal with this in what I consider to be quite a good article in the last Vanguard on page 2 by Paul Kane and will be continuing with it in the coming issue. I would also liked to have discussed Henri's comments on a Quebec "national anti-monopoly front," as reported in the press release. Does this refer to a report that the press carried a week or so previously--- a call that has gone out for a new party or electorial agreement amongst anti-Duplessis forces to run only one candidate--signed by the Reassemblement, some CCFers, Liberals etc. This would seem to me to be a very dangerous development---as it cuts across class lines. Such a development may well take place but it seems to me that Marxists could not give their political support to it. They might well find it a profitable

area to work in and around for it would stimulate broad layers of the population and create a great debate. But when you got down to its purpose we could never support it for it would require us to in many ridings, almost all ridings no doubt to vote for Liberal Party candidates --to cross the class line--to break from our principle of independent labor political action.. You know the success of such a movement in Quebec could mark a great setback for the cores Canada labor movement.... take us back into somekind of Liberal-Labor socialition movement such as Buck and company advocate

Meant to thank you before for the contribution that we published in the Mid-march issue.

Yes, we will let you know in advance next time anyone comes your way. Right now we are getting ready for a concentrated all-~~Canada~~ farm Ontario tour. It will probably be pushing out of Toronto on May 30 or thereabouts--and we will be going down east into Cornwall, Ottawa and will certainly drop in on Montreal. We expect to consolidate some of the work done last year and widen still further our contact.

fraternally

Ross Dowson

E9 1953-65 Misc. Correspondence

569 Yonge Street
Toronto
May 8, 1959

Mr. Jack Batten
Toronto Daily Star

Dear Sir:

I found your review of THE GREAT MAN DIES, in last Saturday's STAR of considerable interest—particularly your comments on the left in the thirties. I gather that you must have been moving in and around the stimulating intellectual atmosphere of the time—the atmosphere that Partisan Review of those days reflected.

Yes, Trotsky and Trotskyism was a big issue amongst the intellectuals of those days, certainly as compared to the situation today. However, Trotsky's doctrine is an even bigger thing today in the political left and it seems to me will again be the cause celebe amongst the intellectuals once the impact of the dead end that capitalism has brought us to again is felt by the new layers of intellectuals that are coming on the scene.

Khruschev in order to answer the pressures of the Soviet peoples for an end of Stalinist totalitarianism and a return to the proletarian egalitarianism of the Lenin-Trotsky period was compelled to deal a staggering blow to Stalinism at the 20th Congress CPSU. The repercussions are still being felt throughout the left everywhere, and even though we are witnessing a decline of the whole left, have roused a new interest in Trotskyism. For the first time in many many years Tim Buck has had to publicly attack Trotskyism—as he did in his recent May Day Meeting here in Toronto, and in a recent issue of the Tribune. Probably you are aware of the fact that a whole new interest has arisen in Trotsky's writings which various book publishers are attempting to meet. Trotsky's LITERATURE AND REVOLUTION has recently been published by Russell-his RUSSIAN REVOLUTION has been republished (three volumes) by University of Michigan. Doubleday have put out a condensed version in the famous Anchor paperback series, and Grosset & Dunlap have published his STALIN in a paperback. Recently Harvard University published a diary that Trotsky wrote in 1935. The second volume of Deutscher's biography will soon be released.

I think that you might well find the diary of considerable interest. Reginald Saunders are the Canadian agents, and would probably be pleased to send you a review copy—the title is TROTSKY'S DIARY IN EXILE 1935. Incidentally Wolfe's theory of Trotsky being an essentially tragic figure and his whole concept going rotten over the Kronstadt incident is blasted apart by this diary which to my mind he quotes somewhat dishonestly in THE GREAT PRINCE DIED on page 390. The diary is permeated with revolutionary optimism—as the foreword comments-"Trotsky indicates no ideological doubts or even soul searching." Wolfe's quote ends where it should truly begin—Trotsky continues to talk about his essentiality <u>now</u> (1935)—five more years, he writes, he needs to assure the continuity of Marxist ideas against Stalinist revisionism to arm the new generation with the revolutionary method over the heads of the leaders of the Second and Third Internationals." As for Kronstadt- this far from palgued him. He answered this matter to the satisfaction I think of anyone serious upon investigation—the population of Kronstadt in 1921 was far different from the sailors who left Kronstadt in 1917 to fertilize the revolution across Russia with their blood.

Trotsky only now is coming into his own. The new generation of intellectuals and workers will find him in his true stature.

Sincerely,

Ross Dowson

1959-May16

REVOLUTION (Taped for radio, May 16, 1959)

We are living in the midst of a developing revolution that is not going to leave one stone of present day society upon another. I am not referring to the development of the planned economy of the Soviet Union which in the space of one lifetime has transformed that country from one of the most backward in the world to the second world power. Nor am I referring to the cataclysmic changes that are taking place in China or Africa. This revolution is taking place right here in Canada and the United States – it is a technological revolution called automation, plus atomic energy.

Back in the early 1700s another great technological revolution took place. Machines were invented to do work formerly done by hand, and steam power was invented and used to drive machines. This revolution laid down the foundations of the society we now know. With the rise of the factory system, the peasant and craftsman became the city wage worker. At the other pole rose the factory owner, the industrialists and the financiers. Kings and nobles who stood in the way of the full and rational functioning of the economy were removed. Man conquered the elements.

Today the North American economy is being strangled by surpluses. Too much goods, too many workers. Back on May 14th Prime Minister Diefenbaker predicted that Canada's gross national product would be 7 per cent above last year's. But just a week previous to that Liberal leader Lester B. Pearson could also say that Canada was faced with a continuing hard core of unemployment which he estimated would be at least 5 per cent of the labor force this year. Even with the growth of the national product he saw unemployment, CHRONIC unemployment.

This unemployment is due to automation, to the revolution in production that, through the automatic factory, promises to eliminate more and more of the labor force from production. This technological revolution is not at all restricted to the basic industries — in Canada its biggest impact may well be in the white collar area.

With this technological revolution too will come a change in social relations. Man will intervene to control the productive process he has created, so that we won't have unemployment and degradation in the midst of plenty, but leisure and the full life — social production for social use. Nothing and no one will be able to stand in the way. That is how I, Ross Dowson, see the future of automation.

AUTOMATION (Taped May 16. 1959)

Automation, instead of bringing leisure is creating unemployment. Technological unemployment has added a considerable amount, although no one really knows how much, to the unemployment that has plagued the Canadian economy since 1956.

In my opinion this demolishes the "we must increase production – not cut hours" approach of the daily press. According to an American economist, Dr. W.S. Woytinsky, output of US

economy must increase 4 to 5 per cent a year to prevent the FURTHER growth of unemployment, just to make up for the continuing increase in the labor force — assuming NO technological and NO economic progress, whatsoever.

But, in the United States, GM and Ford built nearly 60,000 more cars in December 1958 than in December 1957, with 33,400 fewer workers. In all manufacturing, in the decade between 1947 and 1957, the number of production workers rose by only 1 per cent but the index of industrial production bounced up by 43 per cent.

Lester Pearson, not a man to give undue alarm, on May 7 last, saw structural unemployment due to technical progress, in part automation, keeping at least 300,000 unemployed in Canada this year — meaning a loss of hours and production, bigger than ANY strike or even series of strikes that this country could ever see.

Dr. Woytinsky sees more than 4 million unemployed in the US at the end of 1959 unless there is a reduction in the work week to 35 hours a week. It would seem to me that this is a crying need here in Canada — a reduction in the work week at the same take-home pay, to ensure everyone who wants to work suitable employment.

This is Ross Dowson speaking.

E3-1958-61 A+R Houle

Dear Jerry:

Just a line: Alan wanted to go out distributing so I am in the store for a few hours. Have received extensive material on your "crimes" and will be dropping you some mail right after the elections. Have Ruth's letter to answer too. But right now we are busy to make the best of the situation in the elections

Press blackout is most complete ever! Probably worried about our new party appeal — on top of it is going to be a close race between the three and the Star is anxious to get every single labor vote. Our vote will be very hard. Fortunately we have had a few breaks aside from our two leaflets (B of E & Alan + Hazel) 10 min CKFH and 2-7 minutes CFRB — a very good program at a good time. Then Friday — CBC TV — possibly a little TV tonight at city hall.

Our boys in Teamsters organized an excellent meeting the other night.

Doesn't qualify knocked our Nov issue for a loop. Had done preliminary campaign & had planned 3 or 4 days before moving into mayoralty then suddenly we are without any literature. Dropped everything and put heat on printer to get other 2 leaflets out — got them to shove everything aside and we were back in business in 2 days — precious days —

they have only now picked up Vanguard copy
So we will be out after the week-end + the elections
—— too bad —— but can't be helped

so will write next week

Fraternally

Ross

Hey - how about putting the right postage
on your letters — paid 2.5 cents at
this end for one you had 5 cents on

June 22, 1959
Toronto, 569 Yonge

(Johnson, "piked in the US)

Dear Joe;

Hope you got the last letter ok--sort of a change of pace. Ruth is going to have another child she told me the other day. If they are going to have another I suppose this is the time.

John is off on the longest jaunt right now. They came in from a short run in Barrie while I was getting some things ready for them--now they are off to the 500, Cochrane and all point in between. He is doing very well. I happened to count the work today and he was equal to Alan. Cliff is also doing well. They are going to be charged men by this fall. Got some good breaks in Oshawa-met all of Tim's friends. They did so well in Hamilton that we will have to spend some time for us here this fall in that area. Alan is not giving them much time for reading but we were concerned with the election.

I suppose little events in Ontario get no attention from the NY Times Well the Star is beating the drums for coalition for McDonald because as the Globe and Mail wrote one of its heads-CCF sows the ground, Liberals Reap! Bryden got elected and another fellow in Hamilton ~~xxx~~ giving them 5. But the Liberals got 22 seats and 37% of the vote, while the CCF stayed at 17%. Being in too long with too big a majority--and---dishonesty in govt were the issues said Mac---those who believed so quite logically delivered ~~thexxxtexthem~~ that vote to the address where it belonged. Mac made some shocking statements in the process of the campaign--boasted how he could sell, yes he used thatterm-- a wage freeze, and identified himself with hidden tax increases. Tim did what we would expect--ran eight places and averaged 466 votes thus revealing their true strength to everyone.

Attended an excellent lecture at Oddfellows the other night- Dr Rubinstein Annette Rubinstein came up. The discussion was quite stimulating-- on a cultural matter-sort of a change of pace from usual meetings I manage to get to. The audience was very young and while Rubinstein supported the IST which is the main question they heard many of them for the first time ~~xxxx

July 3, 195[illegible]

(Found in 1959)

Minneapolis

Dunne SWP

Dear Vincent

Here is the data on that young comrade of ours that I was talking to you about when at Mountain Spring.

His name is Joseph D. Johnson. Both his mother and father are alive and are living at Chippewa Falls, Wisconcin where they operate a small business. They are not political and are generally well thought of in the community where one of his uncles is or was the sherriff. While he had not seen them or been in correspondence with them for some 7 or 8 years until this Spring their feelings are very warm towards him and they did everything they could to help when he was brought back to Chippewa Falls by the FBI.

Johnson is now serving a three year sentence in federal penitentiary-his address is 6803 PO Box No. FMP, Springfield, Missouri. He will be elegible for parole on October 25. Since his offense is a relatively unimportant one and no doubt his conduct has been exemplary it is reasonable that should he meet the conditions of the authorities that he will be granted parole.

In a letter to me he writes that "there is a chance that I could get it to Flip Chippeaw Falls but this is a very small town with little opportunity. To get a ~~parole~~ parole one needs a job in the town where you are paoled to and someone with a clean record" to "advise" you. Would it be possible that you would have some friends in one of the industrial cities and that they could provide some sort of job. The wages are of no importance for once out jobs can be changed."

Johnson's offence is that while quite young but while elegible for the draft with some vague feelings of opposition to the Korean war he left home finally making his way to Canada, to Toronto where he came in contact with socialist ideas. While his circumstances were unknown to them the Socialist Educational League sponsored him as a candidate in municipal elections under a name which he had again unknown to them adopted as his own. It appears that someone knew of his real identity and shortly after the elections he was visited by the RCMP. He denied their identification of him and Joseph Johnson and decided to return to Chippewa Falls to throw himself upon the mercy of the court. While on his way to Chippewa Falls he was picked up by the FBI and taken under arrest to Chippewa Falls where he was tried and sentenced.

He is an intelligent young man-well read, quick witted. He has worked at many different types of employment--very adaptable. I am confident that he would in no way compromise anyone who would be so good as to aid him in obtaining parole in the city of Minneapolis. Aid in this respect would be greatfully appreciated by all those of us who have had the pleasure of knowing him here in Toronto.

Should you require any further information that I am able to supply would you drop me a line as soon as possible, I would appreciate it if you would let me know as soon as you are able as to what you can do in this respect as I am sure Johnson is anxiously awaiting word.

fraternally

Moss Dawson

Dick has letter

Friday
July 28/59

Dear Ruth + Reg

I have Received your correspondence dealing with the situation out there. I hope you have frozen what can be frozen until we can intervene. Yes I think we should intervene this time.

We are holding a PC meeting tommorrow night. Unfortunately it was just not possible to operate more quickly unless I moved on my own — which I do not want to do

Would you see that someone sends us a follow up on the BC strike — Bill & Jim situation to be here on August 3 at the latest for sure

How was the last article for our purposes?

Fraternally

News to me that I am coming out there - Couldn't think why Cannon was for a day or so - but of course would like to go - but can't

Not a word from Whitney et al

I operate the party channels mainly - Ruth the organizer

309 Yonge Street
Toronto, Ont.

Danny Freeman *Truck details - Vanguard Tour*

Dear Danny;

Received your note today and hurry to reply.

About 10 days ago at least I mailed a letter to you in care of Mountain Spring Camp. Upon my return I wrote our tourists about yourplans and sugges ted that one of them take time out to draw a fairly detailed blueprint of the structure on the truck . Cliff, who I think you know,did so xxxx sent it to me and I forwarded almost non-stop. I assumed that if you were not at the camp that it would be forwarded to you. Possibly you even now have it.

I think from my casual glance over Cliff's notes that it take up pretty well everything you need to know---and I believe I suggested if it did not that I would be pleased to hear from you and tell you more. That still goes. But while I am at the typewriter I should say a few words about a couple of comments you make in your latest note.

I see you suggest that you might try to get a truck at Detroit or poss ibly New York. I am wondering if you heard anything about getting one in Minneapolis. If I recall correctly ~~Xmmmmmm~~ comrades Dunne and Cannon were talking things over at one time during a lull in the convention and they said something about picking up a truck cheap in Minneapolis. I seem to recall their saying that one of the eighteen is now in the second hand truck and car business and again if I am not mistaken they seemd to think that it might be possible that we would not only get a good truck from him but that we would get it free or close to that. I wonder if you would look into that.

I would strongly advise against a trailer cheap or otherwise. Even the lightest and most maneuverable is too damn heavy and ~~awkxd~~ awkward. Above all you want maneuverability-ability to park almost anywhere. When you come to a city with a trailer there are regulations that compell you to put in at a camp. With the truck you do not have any of this--it does not look like it is anything particular--just a truck parked-up a side road on the outskirts in a sand pit, by a river bank or what you will. I would seem to me that even if you could get away with dropping the trailer off when you wnet into town to go about your work you would be compelled to leave someone with it in the fear that someone would just take it in tow. I have seen many trailers When we campigned in Hastings-Frontenac by-election we rented one to use as cheapa living quarters and to set up as a campaign headquarters. It was a pretty good one. But I have never seen one that was as well organized and as useful as our truck set up. One of the comrades tells me that some outfit in California is putting out our truck set -up on a commercial basis.

Our truck is a half ton Ford pick-up. The cab will seat three. The fourth person has to ride in the back. For the life of me I cannot think of what the English call the metal box back of the cab. But it measures 6 foot long within which measurement we kept the superstructure--it is about 4 foot wid and about 1½ feet deep.--quite standard. There are channels cut into the sid

of the metal box at both ends. Uprights of ~~iron~~ one inch angle iron af the propoer height are forced down into these channels and this is the only way in which the superstructure is anchored to the box. We figured that should we ever want to use the truck for some other purpose or to sell this one and get another one the whole t hing could be just lifted off. I tell you this because it is possible that Cliff makes little or no mention of it

If perchance Cliff's detailed drawing has been lost write me at once and we will send you the information anew. But while I am at this I do not recall Cliff saying anything about the necessary equipment. Here is a partial list.

You need lighting. We have a small light run off the battery but it is a drain so we also have a lamp runn off four regular size batteries. Since you need a cColeman stove for cooking purposes it might be worth considering getting one of those Coleman storm lanterns--they would use the same fuel. You need all the necessary cooking utensils for four--important you be prop erly quipped this way for it is important that everyone is in good health- that you eat well-cast iron frying pan, knives,forks,spoons, sugar salt conteiners,etc. You need bed rolls--not bedding--takes up too much room hard to keep clean and get out of the way. You need air mattresses. Dont let anyone tell you he is sleeping on the boards--that may be ok for a few nights but you want everyone rested and in condition for action.Mattresses ,even those hard and thin ones such as out at the camp take up too much room. This time we added the refinment of a hand pump to blow up the mattresses-previous tours we used our lungs. The comrade' personal e fects should be kept down to a minimum--say one bag. They should try to have clothes that are washable and as much as possible not needing to be ironed. When you hit a place where you intend to stay for several days of course you can throw everything into the laundry and it will be ready by the time you are prepared to move off. You need a large water can--you would be suprised how difficult sometim es it is to get water. It is good to be able to wake up in the morning and have the water right on hand for washing and cooking.

My feelings are--oh sure the comrades on the caravan are young and can put up with a little roughing --but nothing is too good for the working class and in particular for the tourists. It isn't all beer e skittles, you hve truck difficulties, runs in with the police, sometimes poor recpetions, rotte weather personality conflicts--so the material conditions that we can cotrol should be the very best possible.

Hope you have Cliff's detailed diagrams by now an that they answer all your problems--and what they dont you will make further enquiries about.

warmest regards

Ross Dowson

July 24, 1959
569 Yonge St
Toronto, Ont.

Joseph D Jonson
5803-FC

Dear Joe;

I have delayed writing you for the past few weeks as I have been expecting to hear from my good friends in Minneapolis. Yesterday I received their letter. Now there are several details that we must come to some understanding on . I gather you will be seeking a parole release--not one that is granted on "good time." How do we go about it? Would you immediately drop me a line for we are now in a position to do whatever has to be done. Do you make the appeal--I would assume so. Then I would have to see to it from this end that you have specifically what you want spelled out in black and white. Let me know what you need--send me any necessary forms if they are available at that end, etc, etc.

Sorry to hear that you have been ill. Yes it would seem to me that it would be a good thing if you took up the body culture game for a period. Every once and a while because of the nature of my employment I come to the conclusion that I should in the morning go through some of the less strenuous exercises and that morning I do so--but never seem to remember to the next. But since your life is so well ordered these days it would seem to be a simple matter to discipline yourself this ways. Yes American Tragedy is a good book--but somewhat wordy. I thought that Hollywood did a good job on it all in all. But I am still sticking to USW by Passos. Have you read it--and is in the library. Which remind me you have not sent me any requests for books which you know I am anxious to send along to you. Two more of Kautsky's books came in the other day published by the people who put out Foundations of Christianity. I am now trying to read Power Elite by Mills and Fads and Fallacies--study of quackery--which is quite good as it has a wide coverage from the Duke University experiments to Velikovsky etc.

This next weekend the boys will be in from the longest lap of their tour. Sofar they have over 600--seem to have got along fine. They are all the strong silent type--didn't have a letter of any importance for last Wednesday although Pet sent in an excellent one for the pervious week. The remarks on the backs are extremely interesting. Strengthening the impressions we created last time. When they come back and I get free of a few items I intend to go out with them into the Niagara-Windsor area. Things are quiet in the Toronto area but the real donnybrook has burst over BC. The BC Taft-Hartley is now being implemented. [illegible] wage increases are no longer of real importance but Bill 43 is the issue. The reaction on the part of those immediately concerned has been very good. Many ingenuous methods have been developed and from here while it has suffered a delay things look fairly good. The discussion on the new party here in Canada has been stimulated by quite a wide and varied expression of opposition. Frank Hall has come out against it as has the new head of the CBRE. The Sask movment has expressed its concern at a recent rally. But Knowles and others appear to be pushing ahead. What w/ the what has happened in Gr BR from Gaitskell's point of view in the unions it will be interesting to see other's thinking. Excellent developments in Eng. dont you think---now things are going to really open up for Healy

But I see we are at the end--will write again shortly

fraternally
Ross

(TV425)

Sunday

Fawdin
1959

Dear Reg

Just a note ×

I believe that you considers out there are Committing a serious error is opposing our running one candidate down here × I think of necessity there must be some latitude granted us × Regroupment is the big question

Yesterday at a special meeting the Toronto branch went on record 11 to 2 in favour that we contest one seat where the CCF has no dance × Tried to arrange a PC meeting today but unable until tomorrow × No doubt in the light of your unanimous opposition we will decide ~~to~~ instruct the branch not to run a candidate × We must settle this whole matter in convention this summer

Enclosed is an announcement of some importance × Eddie can translate × The majority of the Quebec CPP has pulled out under Gagnon — calling for regroupment and running 2 candidates × We are in touch with them and they are quite friendly × More later

Fraternally

Ross

got Ruth's note — See Young is moving out too now Baptized — the Labor Party —

July 25, 1959 Sunday

Dear Ruth and Reg;and Malcolm;

I am sorry that we could not react more quickly to the situation that has been developing out there.Of course it has been moving at an express train speed. Then there is material that have only just received that we would like to have had some weeks back. On top of that we had received nothing from the branch, officially that is, and nothing from Whitney xxxxx himself unto this day

I am sure you must appreciate the need for us here to approach such developments as your have been writing about, carefully .

In essence you comrades have faced us with a series of fait accompli's, Situations that have developed in such a way xxx as to compell us to disapprove. Instead of a discussion as to what to do in a developing situation we are confronted with a series of resignations from the top body by the leading comrades--comrades who are members of the NC. And while we are all in favor of action I hardly think we could call it drifting if we held on for a few weeks and had an discussion if not in the branch most immediately concerned, in the national committee. We have been suffering a kind of paralysis for quite some time now and I do not see the need for the precipitate action that has been taken. Perhaps you have very good reasons which you have not revealed to us. On the other hand is it not possible that such actions tend to play into Bill's hands --if xxxx not Bill I assume that some of the comrades over whom he has influence have some value.

I am fully appreciative of the comments Reg makes on page 3 of his letter dated July 12--of the difficulty of "smoking out the political differences," and am fully prepared to believe that in a situation as we have in Vancouver where there have been long standing difficulties that it might well prove to be the most satisfactory action all xxxxxxxx around to come to an agreement to divide the branch along the lines of elements who feel that they can work together in the interest of our ideas more effectively that way. This was proposed at one time in the Rose fight down here and I opposed it, however I do not think there is any principle involved and In the light of the lengthy and difficult struggle we had to move the dispute onto the political plane it might have been the best course to have followed.

A big matter that I would have liked to taken into account is the possible effect of the separation into two branches on the various comrades and the forces in the two divisions. (It is apparent that you who have made the division are convinced of its correctness from the point of view of implementing our line in Vancouver. No doubt you must certainly have taken into account the effect of your actions on those comrades who are not xx signers of your statement) but we here are in the dark.

We cannot help but feel concerned about the political future of the other comrades--whether they will be able to carry on and learn the lessons of the dispute in their own way, ultimately permitting a fusion of the now divided forces. Is there not a possibility that Bill will take advantage of this situation to drop out. On several ocassions during recent conventions he told me that he drop out for a period. Is it not possible that other comrades, faced with the division, will become demoralized- I know

that the whole situation has been demoralizing for a long time--but it is suprising how some can get hardened to that sort of thing [redacted].

July 24

On Saturday we received the minutes of July 9 along with a letter from Allaline dated July 11 (two weeks old) I gather the branch was informed of the separation at a meeting on July 16--yet not a word of it. The July letter casually talks about the slated August 29-31 conference and "It appears that basically there are problems confronting the branch that the last conference failed to settle; agreement on use of our headquarters, our policy with respect to the proposed Labor Party, mass party work and so on. We hope that with better preparation we may bring agreement out of a new conference."

Regardless of how it has been handled, how it came about we now have two branches. Is it possible that Bill and the others are going to lay claim to being the branch and ask us to treat the situation as if we have a group of defectors?) No matter how it came about it is probable that this solution was in the cards so to speak-that it is the one [redacted] would ulitmately have arrived at.

The PC met last night and had a very full discussion on the whole matter. The general consensus of opinion is that now that the division has taken place let us make every attempt to make the most of it. As best as one can from the distance we have been following Ruth's vigourous attempts to implement the policy agreed upon at the last convention with high expectation. We have all had personal experiences with Bill and other comrades, if not opposition, insufferable actions that hamstring and frustrate others' efforts to do anything.

Ruth in a document which is quite a suprise to us--dated Feb 2 but last week was the first we saw it-clearly defines a tactical difference within the old branch. however I note that this was not commented upon or discussed. I also note that as we approached the division there was no attempt on your part to state that the disagreement flowed from tactical differences. Ruth in her statement of resignation writes about underlying differences that will ultimately be manifested. Just as Reg talks about smoking out the political differences and a "condition that has persisted for an extened period without clearly established political differences coming to light."

The division has taken place in the minds of the comrades in the branch in opposition to a poisonous atmosphere-aggrated in what appears to be cliquism, leaden apathy, foot dragging support etc (Reg July 12). The PC therefore it seems to us is not placed in the position of supporting this or that group regardless of what it may feel at this time as to the [redacted] of the differences and the political correctness of one as against the other. We are recognizing a situation where a branch has now split divided. We anticipate that freed from what at this time is considered a non-tactical difference, that both groups will now be able to move out more freely in better spirit to implement the line that we adopted at the convention. It is not a matter of who is right and who is wrong-who is expected to carry the line and who is not. We expect forces that up to now have been frustrated to be released

This type of division requires that we make every effort not to get at cross purposes with one another. While there are no doubt many personal feelings of antagonism we are really in fraternal competition with one another-not to see who is right and who wrong but who best can implement our line and ultim

ately on the bais of a better understanding of one another bring about a fusion of our forces.

We do not know how this division has taken place--formally that is. Did it come up at the July 16 meeting--was it made as an announcement and were comrades asked to divide themselves down the room. It is porbable that you were able to maintain a fraternal atmosphere and to strike of some kind of liason body. If not we think that it is very necessary that we find ways and means of arranging for a liason committee. It would be most unfortunate if we get into contest with one another over contacts--if we do not advocate a parallel line in those areas where our activities may happen to overlap, that we dont needlessly duplicate our efforts.

To my knowledge this situation is without precedent in our movemnt here or elsewhere. We intend to help in whatever way we can assure that the best in the interest of the movement will come out of it. We will make every effort we can to strengthen our collaboration.

The tour is coming along well. The comrades must have picked up about 800 subs so far. They are just about coming in from having seen everyone who is at all active in the labor or socialist movement in Northern Ontario area. Expect to be in this coming weekend. They will then probably go off to Peterborough to give me a chance to get the paper out and then I intend to go with them into the Niagara area where we made some advanced contacts last year and hope to be able to arrange a few meetings.

Will write again as soon as I am able.

warmest regards

Ross I

I take it for granted that now we are divided that there will be no conference. It would be bad in my opinion if you now got into a political dispute with the rest of the comrades.

What are you calling yourselves - for quick reference purposes?

July 28,1959
569 Yonge Street
Toronto

Milnes Landing (B.C.)

Dear Comrades Johnsons

So the struggle has broken out against Bill 43 willy-nilly. Reg wrotes that he will be attneding the rally called by the BC Federation of Labor this coming week-end- We are all looking forward to his report for the Vanguard. The ranks appear ready willing and able for the struggle. From here it would seem that the SC Government is also ready. Probably their hope is to polarize all the forces of conservatism around their banner--to block the Libs and Tories--to take advantage of the impact of the Big BUsiness drive against unions so that the lines are drawn sharply that you are either for the CCF or the Sc. No doubt they are counting on a weak kneeed policy by the union leadership. It so happens that the top trade union bureacracy is not centered in BC and the local leadership not so entrenched and divorced from the ranks as slesewhere in Canada. It will be interesting to see if the pessure of the ranks is sufficnently strong to force an all-out struggle against Bill 43. I see from the Pacific Tribune that the LPP treats the situation xx in BC as merely an assault by the bosses and a wages-conditons struggle which it hopes and prays will be settled on this basis. Xxxx the press says nothing about Strachan add the CCF's polcies. The comrade write that they have been doin force on the observer's lines. I am sure we are widening our connections as never before. I will be writing Macphee tonight. No doubt things are popping in Prince Rupert. The pulp and sulphite workers union from gliancing through their paper has a real core of militants in its rnaks. The last issue carried that magnificent cartoon of Laura Grey's capitalism in war and in peace--lime plants-dead men; live men-dead plants. We sent it to them on their request. They had an excellent edotorial on the need for a clss struggle union leadership in the last issue. Ray is the organizer of the fishworkers in Prince Rupert. We hope they will send us some material for the coming issue.

What impact is the struggle having in your area? Is the CCF club on ice until the fall--or are we able to do anything through it?

The all-Ontario tour is coming along very well. Tomorrow night the comrades are due in from the northern lap. They have been as far north as Cochrane and west as the Soo. So far they have well over 900 subscriptions. They have seen everyone who is active in any way in the union or socialist movement. Had lots of run ins with the police. A very good experience all in all for our excellent quartet. Pat and Alan are on the tour again--I think you must have met both of them. They are accompanies by two young and excellent comrades-one just 21 and the other about 19. Some of our contacts like Bob Carlin former CCF MLA who was expelled in the late forties for too close association with the "reds" gave them a warm welcome--he had been expecting us as he said we were the only ones doing anything for socialism th se days in Canada. We have been getting very nice letters from a different one of them for each of our Wednesday branch meetings over the past month and I must say they are all growing under the experience.

569 Yonge Street
Toronto, Ontario
August 2, 1959

Mike Patterson
4676 Hutchison
Montreal

Dear Mike;

The silence between the Socialist Educational League and the Socialist Party, both formally and informally has become intolerable. No doubt we both have excuses but no good reasons.

We are most anxious to know how the SP is making out these days-what kind of activity it is conducting and what progress it is registering.

We were hoping that several of us would be dropping in on you this last month but it now seems that it will not be possible. Our all Ontario Vanguard tour will not be able to take the Ottawa, Cornwall Montreal jaunt that we had originally planned. Here it is August and they have not gone into the Niagara Peninsula and the London-Sarnia-Windsor area where we made such promising contacts last year. The successes in the Northern Ontario area were such as to shove our schedule out of gear. Our comrades came in last Thursday night with just under 1,000 subscriptions for the Vanguard. They have been as far west as Sault Ste Marie and north as far as Cochrane, renewing old acquaintances and establishing new ones. The reception that our comrades got from activists in the labor and socialist movement was an excellent one. They were particularly impressed by the response in Rouyn-Noranda

We have been carrying two educational activities over the summer months--a class on Marxian economics by Virginia Batten and a class every Friday evening on diverse subjects. This spring we held a very successful trade union conference on the anti-labor law drive and the Laing case--I believe I sent you copies of the resolutions that were passed. We intend to further this project this fall--and we are in a better position to do so as we have widened our trade union base. We will in all probability be opening our fall's activites with a vastly improved headquarters. If all goes well we will be moving into a new quarters with a hall 49ft by 18 ft besides an improved store and offices etc. We have widened our connections with trade union and CCF militants through our active participation in the recent provincial elections behind the CCF campaigns. This fall we expect to further our efforts to expedite the development of the projected labor party along class struggle--revolutionary lines-by effective participation in the conferences that are being held to discuss the party.

We see that the Labor Progressive Party has been concentrating considerable effort in the Montreal area. Since they are amazingly inactive in the Toronto area we are wondering if they are attempting to neutralize your efforts to build a socialist party.

we are looking forward to hearing from you

fraternally
Ross Dowson

August 4, 1959
569 Yonge Street
Toronto, Ont. Canada

Vincent Dunne
322 Hennepin Ave, Room 205
Minneapolis 1, Minn

Dear Vince;

As soon as I received your note I wrote J.B.J. a letter asking him for the details as to how we should proceed. Your probings around the matter have proved to be quite valuable. Just this morning I received a letter from J.B.J. I think that it is best that I give you more or less what he wrote .

He has requested an interview with the parole officer but it may be sometime before he gets it--however he states that the following information is correct and more than likkly complete.

parole

Yes ,he is seeking a ~~xxxix~~ release--he will be ellegible October 26 The board apparently is meeting in October and it takes about 40 days after that to get an answer--approx December. If he doesn't get a parole his "good time" sentence would be up August 1960 for which no action from out side would be necessary.

As to the parole he writes the following;

"The decision is up to the parole board--the prisoner can have no council. If the prisoner is granted parole he then needs for the parole to take place--it also helps to get the parole

1- a job--has to be a legitimate job-there has to be proof of this job. Forms are sent to the employer and an agent calls on the employer.

2-a parole adviser- who signs the monthly reports of the prisoner and generally acts as an advisor to the prisoner--the parole advisor must have a steady job, a permanent residence and be without a prison record. Forms are sent to the parole advisor and an agent calls.

No forms are available at this time. Nothing will happen till November."

That is all that he has to say on the matter, Vince. I assume therefore aside from having a legitimate job lined up and a parole advisor both meeting the qualifications outlined there is nothing for us to do but sit and wait until he sees the prison's parole officer and can provide us with the forms. I assume this to be so but will check further when next I write. His moral seems to be good. In a previous letter he tells me that he is reviewing American Tragedy and now Man's Fate for the prison paper. He has also come across some fellows who know and have worked with A.J.Muste and as you there were a few good ones. Will keep you informed

warmest regards

Ross Dowson

August 10, 1959

Dear Comrades;

Comrade Graham has written us several lengthy letters about what I am sure all of us consider to be a most unfortunate development with regards to our forces in Vancouver—the division of our branch into what is in effect two branches.

Several of these letters, including the notes that C and L have forwarded us, aside from expressing your determination not to let this division deter you in any way from carrying forward our work, which is certainly gratifying to us, contain lengthy lists of grievances against the other group of comrades. You will appreciate that we have been receiving similar letters from the other comrades but slanted somewhat the other way.

As important as these grievances and charges may be and may become we do not propose to take them up, to investigate them, weigh them and cast a verdict. This would be a long process—a difficult one which would require on-the-spot, accepted-as-neutral, impartial investigators. Besides we do not think that to do so would in any appreciable way aid in resolving the main problem— To our mind that is to reach at first some kind of modest working relationship between the two groups in the direction of realizing their complete unification for meaningful work towards the socialist revolution.

Comrade Graham letters also project several propositions to meet the situation. We have discussed them at length on the Political Committee and I would like to give you some of our thoughts on them.

Comrade Graham proposes that we should undo the recognition that we have given the other comrades. We are not clear as to exactly what he means. Are we being asked to declare one group of comrades as against another group of comrades to be no longer Trotskyists, to be no longer members of our movement? Are we being asked to designate one group as the branch—as the continuator of what was—and the other as some kind of second class formation.

Two of the comrades in the one group are members of the NC—the majority of the West Coast NC members—another was branch organizer up until the division, and another the treasurer. Both groups contain comrades who like comrade Graham have decades of devotion and dedication to our ideas and our organization.

On what grounds—we ask—are we expected to recognize the one group and not the other? While everyone feels that there are political overtones, political implications to the dispute and the division, no one is clear on just what they are. What is to be our criteres in this case?

While we have not condemned the actions of one group as against the other, neither have we condoned the actions of one or the other. We have only recognized what is an obvious, and unmistakeable fact—that the Vancouver branch that was one now stands divided into two parts. We earnestly seek collaboration with both parts in the interests of the Canadian national movement.

Comrade Graham makes another proposition—that we should order the other group "back" to discuss perspective and policy in relation to program, then if we find it necessary to divide we do so on what could be considered a more rational basis. The purpose of this proposition

is obviously a good one--to seek out the differences in discussion--to resolve them -- and if this is not possible to realize a division which would hold the best possible promises of unification in the near future.

A proposal if it is not merely a formality to settle accounts, must have some possibility of being realized. It appears to us that one of the parties is not at all prepared to entertain an order of this character. This proposition was made in the branch a short time ago--in the form of a motion for an August conference. What do the developments mean out there if not that the time for discussion has passed. There is no reason to think that such a proposal would achieve its purposes as outlined by Comrade Graham.

Of course the order could be issued. Should one group refuse to obey, disciplinary action could be taken--one could be expelled and the other recognized as the branch. If such an action were taken it would not be for refusal to obey the order as such but the implications given to the order--that those who declare willingness to obey are the Trotskyists and that the others are not. We feel sure you will agree that such a method of determining who is and who is not a Trotskyist would be making a fetish of an organizational proposition--willingness to discuss.

No, comrades, whether we like it or not and no matter the degree of blame there is not one Vancouver branch but two branches. This is the reality and we must commence from here. Not threats with damnation and predictions of doom, but what is needed is a serious and honest discussion of how to proceed from here.

We think that it is highly possible, as has been suggested, that the division can yeild even positive results. Comrades in both branches have told us of many difficulties in the collaboration of past years which they feel have restricted the numerical growth of the party in Vancouver. We can now enter into a period of comradely competition.

It is necessary to preserve the precious cadres that both groups contain for the movement. It is obvious that our relations are extremely sensitive, that there are many antipathies and much ill-will. It would be quite easy to sustain these feelings and even to further inflame them. It will require considerable maturity and integrity to overcome these dangers

It is necessary that we immediately strike off forces from each group to constitute a liason committee. The personel should be carefully selected. The representatives should meet, not with conditions, demands, ultimatums. but to seek out hat can be commonly agreed upon . Our objectives should be simple. For instance it is essential where our areas of activities overlap that we do not get at cross purposes, that our all too few forces collaborate effectively. If we approach this in the proper spirit we may well get a new measure of one another. In the process our collaboration will grow and our organizational division will resolve itself either in a unification into one branch ar a division which will be a purposeful one and in complete harmony with the needs of our movement.

fraternally

R Dowson

Ross Dowson

In a recent note Comrade Graham comments "By the way C and D are said to be acting for you--if this is true you should have told us..." These two comrades for whom we have the highest respect are not "acting for" us, but we are sure that they can be of great aid in helping us solve some of our problems there. A joint meeting where they could present a a report of the southern conference would seem to us to be just what the doctor orders. Incidently -we are enthused about the report of the picket line action.

August 25, 1959

Dear Reg;

Meant to write you long ago--in fact just as soon after the paper left the presses as I could, but got tied up in many things. Joined the tour in the Welland area but had to come back, for the third time now offers we have made for new places have been turned down --we thought for political reasons and now on the last two we know. Tommorrow have to go on the prowl again this time knowing that by Sept 16 we have to be out of here.

As you can see from the lengthy article that I wrote on the BC situation I am in disagreement with the one you sent in . I was going to publish your item and parallel it with an editorial but concluded that that would even be worse.

I was suprised to receive the article without some note of explanation as to the situation. Possibly you felt the deadline prohibited it. Well, as has often happened no one met the deadline, then when I did get material down to the printer I found that the linoty was not due to return from his holidays until after the weekend so we got pushed well behind. Of course if you had been somewhat closer than Vancouver I would have immediate got in touch with you and discussed the matter.

The big thing I was looking for--in line with all the previous policy of the paper on Bill 43 and in the light of the strong pressure for a political strike evidenced up April last--was material on a general strike at this conference. Even if it had not come up it would seem to me that we would be required to say something about the idea since we had vigorously attacked the trade union brass's policy before, not only on this concrete demand but also on their ads urging obedience to the law, submission to it. What with the fining of North-a most far-reaching action not mentioned by either yourself or in Malcolm's even longer article--and of course the ironworkers-it seemed to me that it would be absolutely essential that we take up the whole matter of where do we go from here.

Your article is written as if some really decisive action was planned at the August 1st rally. It is written with great vigor and militancy but when I came to get to the meat of it--to see what actually was planned-it seemed to me to be so much words. I read the part in CAPS over three or four times to try and grasp its significance. All I could conclude at the time was that it was a lot of words, high sounding, strident but just words that they slipped over on the delegates. I had that opinion from just reading them-- for instance I could not see how it would be possible to force the courts to quash all the penalties they had been handing out-to make them back right down and the government to without anything less than the revolution itself--not to speak of a 24 hr demonstration . There was nothing else reported in the article that backed up the idea that the trade union brass in BC so cowardly in April had become insurrectionists in August. It would take a really Bolshevik leadership heading the entire trade union movement to prevent a rupture in the front when the bosses offered first this group of unions and then that, a goodly portion of the demands that they had made. I couldn't see the Fishermen refusing to go back when given a wage offer on the basis that the fines would have to be repaid or revoked first. Nor any other union in BC or anywhere else in Europe or America for that matter.

Since then of course we have the Fishermen going back with what amounts to the last offer of the bosses.--a pretty rotten settlement it seems to me. Then the ironworkers. With that of course you hardly have a struggle against Bill 43--you have a wages struggle by the woodworkers.

I couldn't see how it would be possible that the general strike idea wouldn't come up. No doubt we must have raised it

Regardless of the reception that the rally gave it, or how it came up, it would seem to me that we who had identified ourselves with the demand would have to deal with it. Now of course I do not know if it came up but since the meeting was in camera it permitted me to use the material that the Province carried—that "hotheads" had raised it.

By the time I came to write the article of course the scene had changed—the ironworker and fishermen were back and this made it possibly to write up a commentary on the situatio allowing us to take up the whole matter of the strategy of a meaningful fight against Bill 43—to do a job on Strachan and his government intervention plea. etc.

I dont think that it is correct for us to use the arguments that workers and union leaders in the courts may have to play up—that the bridge was unsafe—I think that the paper should come out straight against slave labor. I think th observation pickets really are humiliating—that the union movement is thereby revealed to be in a truly ignominious position. The correct policy would be to turn out a massive picket line and let the police arrest one after another till the courts are over flowing. The Ironworkers would have to pay the 10,000dollar fine to preserve their proper ies but I think nothing would be fitter than that the ironworkers leaders refuse to pay bail and go to jail. And the same for North too. Then you would really rouse the workers anger, really lay the base for a struggle against Bill 43. I gave Ernie Tate hell when he paid the five dollar fine and reminded of his great compatriot's comment that [illegible] will never be free until Irishmen are prepared to die—only in this case it would be overnight i jail. We have to break the injuctions—remember the Toledo strike and the jammed courthouse be said.

The paper should of course say what it has to say. Often comrades due to many circumstances surrounding them are not able to speak up or are only able to fish for radical reactions amongst the workers. But what they cant say the paper has to say. Defy the injunctions, fill the jails. Possibly the climate isn't suitable—perhaps the April situatio has been dissipated. Well we weren't faced with having to estimate the situation in my article —I made it an educational dissertation for the education of the militants preparatory for the future...and of course missing the whole matter of the rottenness of the present leadership.

I would like to hear your opinion of the Vanguard article.

warmest regards

Ross

The Pacific Tribune and CCF News coverage was truly scandalous eh what. The Stalinists treat the whole thing as merely a strike—a wages struggle—which they hope and pray will be settled by one or the other and all [illegible]. Even the capitalist press here designated it as a fight against Bill 43. The CCF NEWS doesn't even mention the Fishermen and the North case. When the Stalinists handle the North case they make no mention of the lengthy quotations that Rankin made from statements by David Lewis on injunctions. They say nothing of general strike feelings on August 1st but then back in April while they reported the bare facts they never identified themselves with supporting such action.

Write me at once if you can use a couple of hundred [illegible] bakers!

September 2, 1959.

Dear Joe: Johnson

Its hot, hot, hot here in Toronto and has been for over a month- not even a good rainfall seems to cool us off.

Ruth has been working in the store since the beginning of June and helping to clear up some of the correspondence. Little Paul and Jerry are both fine. Jerry is working at Goodyear Rubber in New Toronto which looks good for a while without lay-offs. Seem to be a good bunch of fellows there tho just starting to get active as was only on temporary staff until July with no seniority rights.

I guess the biggest piece of news is that I am moving the store to Queen St. (across from projected new city hall) this weekend. Avvery snazzy place-over 100' deep plus a full basement so can have store, offices, storage plus a nice hall which I can rent out in order to defray the rent. Other than building a partition separating store from back part there is nothing to be done in improvements-Al flooring, light fixtures, good paint work. There is every liklihood that city will expropriate this area for building purposes but figure we're safe for 3 yrs-have 5 yr lease from landlord with a sliding scale of rent (you never know where these things will end) starting at $300 per m. for 1st yr.gradually increasing to $400 per m. for 5th yr. if building is still standing that is. Business is bound to be better in that area which makes me less scary about the financial risk involved-close to Eaton's, Simpson's, lots of passing trade.

Alan and Cliff and John are still travelling about. (Pat got called back to work at the end of July). Alan is leaving the city for the winter to take a course at a very excellent school. Cliff has indicated his desire to help in store (I told him money small, experience tremendous) so he's all eager. Ruth is leaving at end of Sept. anyway as is expecting. So far this year we have 1,200 new readers- we're pleased.

Bruce and his wife are going to take up residence in Vancouver at Thanksgiving-one would interpret this as a desire to get away from the pressures of Toronto life to the easy going atmosphere of Vancouver. No other stated reason for change except restlessness (?)

Gertie and Ken took the summer off, bought a Volkswagen and have been travelling around the country having a whale of a good holiday. I expect them back sometime this weekend. They will probably have lots to tell and lots of pictures to show us.

I am running a book sale this week getting rid of all the hardback books except for ones which I really wish to stock. The idea is to make the new store essentially a "paperback" bookstore and establish it as such in the city. As you may know more and more of the best books are coming out in cheap paperback editions which people really go for. "Lolita" has been our best seller for some time with Russell's "Why I am Not a Christain" running a close second on sales. He was interviewed on Canadian TV about a month ago which seemed to stimulate interest in his books and there was a sudden spurt in Bertrand Russell sales with the above-mentioned title leading the list of course.

Well the good old CNE is open again. Haven't been down as yet and if this heat keeps up will not go at all. Of course will probably make an exception for the holiday Monday and go down and see how the parade comes off. I understand that there is quite a large selection of West German products on display this year and was reading a news item in which trade trade between Canada and W. Germany is expected to expand in the next period. The Volkswagen is doing very well here, although I see that Ford and GM are meeting the competition with a small model of their own this year. Jerry was telling me about a small car designed in England which is very economical to run and would sell for about ~~$~~ $595.00 here. I wonder if such a bargain would ever reach Canadian dealers.

(Labour Day Parade)

end
(incomplete)

Dunne, SWP

81 Queen Street West
Toronto 1, Ont.
October 5, 1959

Dear Vincent;

After a long silence I am rushing this off to you for immediate action. I have received a letter from Joseph D. Johnson 6803 PC on this matter of parole.

The meeting of the parole board will be October 14 and an answer one way or the other will be given by Christmas. At a meeting with the parole officer Joe was asked

1)--Where would he stay if he got parole--he answered Minneapolis.

2 --What job would he have if he got parole--he answered that friends in Minneapolis promised him a job there. He then asked for the name and address of such an employer.

He asks me to find out the name and address and send it to him by October 14--and addsundelined--dont worry about it because parole does not depend on such information at all. However that comment may have been made because he doubts that we can do it for him.

I know this gives you little time--but if you can manage this ad send the necessary details to me so that Icun get it off to him and in his hands by that date we would all appreciatevit

You will note that we have changed our address. ..bigger, better headquarters and store than ever---but another time--I must get this in the mail

warmest regards

Ross Dowson

81 Queen Street West
Toronto 1, Ont.
October 8, 1959

(Johnson)

Dear Joe;

It seems hard to believe but I am really squeezing this note into the schedule and you have top prority--have and have had . Glad to hear that you have been interviewd for parole-- Well you have a good job waiting for you. Vince writes me that he is entirely conminced that it is within the range of your capabilities and holds further opportun ities for advancement. Perhaps you will be even able to say you knw me when--surroundings will be congenial. The offer is made by the
L.Martin Company
2406 Riverside Ave, Minneapolis 6, Minnesota

This company has been in business in Minnesota since 1926. They line up, service, buy and sell second hand trucks. There are a variety of diff-erent types of jobs in this work and that is why it is certain that you will easily fit in. The wage will depend on the kind of work done to a considerable extent but you can be sure that it will be a living wage. You will be able to obtain suitable living quarters not far from the job as the business is located in a semi-residential district within 5 or 10 minutes from the Minneapolis lopp.

Glad to hear that your folks were able to get down to see you--to take their holidays that direction--which reminds me that I have had none this year--last year I had that lengthy trip across Canada. They wrote me a very nice letter which I opened just a few minutes ago. They affirm your reports of good health and general good adjustment--tan and more lean condition and al

In about another month or two we will be more or less adjusted to our new location. A fantastic job--you have no idea what we have acc umulated and think to be of value. And for the first time Iactually threw things away. With the character of the new place being of such a high and modern standard even I admit that we could not continue to hold onto some of our possession. For instance we are re-upholstering the one chesterfiled and the other is going to have a new set of foan rubber cushions. Boy could we have used your help---a couple of weeks ago I suddenly realized how tired I was--when I found myself waiting in line to take the escalator out of the subway and riding home, only about 12 minutes walk away. But I have recuperated now. Still lots to do--all the big jobs have been done--but we are in operation again. We will have to get some phots taken--the store is first class--about half as large again as the old one. Back of that we have a tremendous space-just what we wanted--and behind that again sort of a loungevwhere I can cook my can of Campbell soup for dinner. Then we have a lengthy basement much better than the other one where I intend to do most of my work. It is costing us plenty--but the first month here was bette: than the last at 569 which incidently was the best we ever did up there. So I think we will be alright. Now we have what we alwayscwanted and what we really deserve.

Do you hearfrom John these days. I will be seeing him at a banquet to be held on the 25th. The banquet is in honor of Mr Farrell and the new building he has taken occupancy if warmest regards

ROSS DWSON

October 10, 1959

Dear Ruth;

Havent yet unsorted and co-ordinated the various items of correspondence that piled up during the moving and various stages of unpacking that we are almost completed--but I left yours on top so that I could pick it up if not first--second or third.

Last night we finally got to working on our back room which we will call the lounge. I am typing from the bar right now--not that we havent got lots of other facilities but the phone keeps ringing about the truck and it now takes practically half an hour to get up from the downstairs back offices to the phone in the store. We have decided to sell the truck so that we can get some money which we need badly--besides there is no place to park it right down here in the center of the city and we will need a better one for next year.

It is good to hear that Malcolm came through well with the cataract operation. I will be dropping him a line in the next day or so with regards to the next issue of the paper but in the meantime if you happen to be speaking to him tell him the deadline is this next Monday-the 19th I think-and we are now really looking forward to him getting down to his memoirs of the early days of the Canadian Marxist-Leninist movement.

Everyone here was really impressed with the report of the excellent meeting in the new hall. A nice article of a type that MacKenzie wrote up in the Press to supplement the Vanguard article. Glad to hear how many were able to make it to the southern camp- Really too bad that none of number 1 got down so as to help overcome what appears to be their conviction that the division was engineered so to speak from here with SWP agreement or approval. No doubt the southern visit was beneficial for all-particularly our newer comrades. I gather that Grieves was there--he sent a postcard to Hugh. The confidence that the various comrades expressed in you I feel sure is not at all misplaced. I dont doubt xxx that all of us at various moments when we have cause to think about it, feel inadequate in the face of the great responsibilities that confront us--but we are what there is. We have developed a bit of a cadre that has had a great common experience--we have accumulated a considerable amount of political capital from the years of work we have done---and we have the program--the ideas that have been tested, tried through decades of struggle. I am confident that you will not only survive but really develop as never before.

Too bad you have that big outlay on the car. How do you think we should handle the wind-up report on the drive? We have received nothing from Number 1 On this basis we will fall far short of our objective. Has the co-ordinating committee met lately? Have they discussed this matter? I would suppose so since we would consider approaching commonly known contacts like Shelly Rogers etc. What does number one say? I have heard nothing but of course it is to a considerable degree my own fault as I have sent them no correspondence what with xxxx the turmoil here. Let me know within the next week. I will be writing number one today.

Now I am wondering if you have received anything from the Battens within the last week or so. xx At our Wednesday night branch meeting of September 30, as final preparations were announced for our next Sunday full day conferen Bruce announced that he and Bunny were preparing and intending to submit a document on the Sunday. This announcement came right on the heels of a rather confused and muddled resignation statement by a young comrade who we

recruited about 6 months ago and was tied in by Bruce with this resignation. On Sunday, although the conference was opened to our closer contacts-designed so-to-speack as a recruiting event, we received copies of their document--and along with it a statement of resignation from the party. On the heels of that came two more resignations--from a young English couple that we had recruited into the party about 6 months ago. The conference accepted the resignations and then with a high moral wind about its business. Sad to say (in a way) these resignations, particularly Bruce and Bunny's, had no impact on the branch or the convention whatsoever.

The conference was a great success. It was a full day affair. We discussed in detail several matters of importance to the branch. It was not a convention but a conference. Several short documents were presented on various aspects of our work by various comrades--one on our youth work, another on social activities, another on our CCF work-a discussion on finances and so forth. Comrade Jerry formerly of Vancouver now of O----was there. He has probably sent a detailed picture of the conference to Ho or Leslie. I would suggest that thro ugh the coordinating committee you ask for it. His comments would be of interest to you all. A new executive was elected and we successfully launched this coming falls activity in our new headquarters.

I write that it was sad to see that Bruce and Bunny's resignation had no impact not from the point of view that we carried on without a hitch but that these two comrades have left the movement without the movement being in anyway able to learn from their "criticisms". Since their return from Montreal --thereby leaving us without contact with the only really favorable regroupment with ex-LPers in the country, relations have been very strained. When they suggested going to Vancouver I encouraged this as I thought that it would prove a real aid to their re-assimilation into the movement. I believe that their presentation of a document meant that they would not be going to Vancouver--without that they would consider themselves able to leave from here with more or less good grace. The resignation writes finish to their going to Vancouver. ...in my opinion finish to political life of any kind on their part.

Did they send you a copy? I doubt it. As soon as we are able to get down to a typewriter we will send you a couple--the few we have were grabbed up by the comrades as we intend to have a discussion on it this coming Wednesday night. It is a pitiful thing. A classic emanation from a couple of petty bourgeois types moving away from the proletarian influence that the party was on them. Marx somewhere wrote that history repeats itself, I dont remember the exact words but to the effect --first as a tragedy and second as a tragic comedy. You wouldn't know that these comrades for all their bookreading ever came across the old mans Defence of Marxism or Cannon's Struggle for a Proletarian Party. They just dont understand what we are trying to do--build a proletarian combat party. It is completely non programmatic--non political. It deals with our educational program, the atmosphere in the branch, the orientation that we attempt to give young workers coming around us. It states that we operate with "organizational methods of Stalinism at its worst." It gives quite a picture of the goings on here, it seems that there was a hysteria here when it was discovered that we were "not monlithic in its unequivocal support to Freud as the Marx of psychology." and so on. It seems that we twist "comrades from normal human beings into fanatics without regard for personal lives or simple possessions..."

There are several dirty li tle knife twists in the document that parallel their disorienting the three young comrades that they encouraged to resign. Somewhere they have us characterizing the Vancouver comrades as a pack of useless petty bourgeois which you well know is not the case and never has been.

The whole things is malicious. In their statement they just announce that they are resigning. They say things which if they get into the Gagnon groups hands will do us great harm—and I hear that they are off for the week end to Montreal. They dont even suggest that there is anywhere else to go. They claim to have seen the light and hope that others will do so also and thus leave the SEL. The three young comrades that they encouraged to make the demonstration were never ever really in the party. One of them was in the English Pablo group. Her husband an excellent working class type was to a considerable degree disoriented before we got him even close to us by Ken Raisen whom he got to know through his wife. Raisen is Pablo's connection on this continent. I am expecting in their next release to read of the bread split and crisis in the Canadian section of the IC. The other comrade is the brother of our branch organizer--about seventeen years old intelligent but a real diletante student type who doesn't like the prolet arian atmosphere of the Toroto SEL. He never seemed to understand the re— action of comrades to his pontifical words of advice as to how they should work in their trade union local etc.

I am sending you this bit of detail as it is possible that they have circulated their material--at anyrate you will have received the minutes that will report the incidnat in a cryptic manner--and possibly Jerry's letter will have got around to you. The comrade who is giving the educational —a comrade who had broken with Bunny to the Cdn Pabloites and returned to the SEL with her— may well write his comments out. If so I will send a copy onto you. If not I will write up something on this petty-bourgeois splinter first chance I have.

Our big banquet is well underway. We are hoping to crowd about 60 into our new hall. Farrell is booked to come up. Tickets have been printed, live music booked, menu worked out etc etc. Biggest thing we will have done in this direction yet. We expect it will bring many old timers who have been drifting away over the years back to our ide and consolidate the work we have been doing on new elements.

warmest regards

Ross

81 Queen St W.
Toronto 1, Ont.
Nov 4, 1959

Letter to the Editor
The Toronto Globe and Mail

Dear Sir;

Your report of Controller Newman's attempts to get the provincial government to extend the powers of the Medical Officer of Health, and failing that, to win ammendment to the City of Toronto 1936 Act so that condemned buildings be demolished or renovated is of interest to everyone. But what is wrong with city By-Laws- No. 14466 and 9868.

When mayoralty candidate for the Socialist Educational League I persistantly urged the enforcement of these by-laws according to which the city can seize properties considered substandard, repair them and compel the owner to meet the costs of the work with a lien on the premises. And it is not just a matter of eliminating uninhabited eyesores. Many Torontonians are compelled to live in houses which contravene health and fire standards. They and the whole community need the protection promised by these by-laws.

Congratulations for your editorial on PARTIES IN CIVIC POLITICS. It is to be hoped that all the forces backing the new Labor Party will see to it that there is a labor slate in next years municipal elections.

Ross Dowson

81 Queen Street West
Toronto 1, Ont.
November 13, 1959

Dear Vic;

Sorry to be so long in taking up your request for any information I have on W.H. Auden--We have been quite busy lately--and this being Friday--a day when the printer cannot take copy even if I were able to give it to him I am finally able to get around to your problem. All the more sorry in that I have little to forward to you.

Did you see the Auden book we have in the store? I believe that he is not too easy to come by. A chap requested this book --we were told it was unobtainable and then suddenly it arrived. It is called collected shorter poems but but it actuall includes all his poems except three long ones--New Year Letter, For the Time Being and The Age of Anxiety...nd and his verse plays. If you have the dough I would seem to me to be well worth the $3.50 --covers 1930-1944

AtAt one time I used to follow literary trends and developments quite closely --but unfortunately I have not done so since about 1941--a long time ago. I kept a sort of file of material, which I thought would be of more lasting value. A week or so ago I went through it hoping to come across some material on Auden or perhaps his friend Spender. Unfortunately there was nothing. But there has been lots written on him as a poet--as one who identified himelf with some the the greater political issues of our time....for I have read one or two.articles myself.

I am wondering what kind of library you have at Kingston or just how accessible the Ottawa library is to you. If I am not mistaken a couple of years ago the govern ment put aside a couple of million dollars to set up a comprehensive catalogue at Ottawa of all material available in libraries across the country...and if I am not mistaken a service whereby say the Kingston library could get material from the Toronto library upon request.

Here in Toronto Reference they have a book called (if I am not mistaken) the Review of Reviews. It contains reveiws as they appeared in the most impo tant journals of the more important books--and of course often the reveiws of important books are by important writers. ...who go sometimes quite far afield from the spec- ific work at hand. I am sure that all of Auden's books would have been reviewed with many sides comments on his evolution. The Toronto Library also subscribes and has a fiarly complete file I would think of a magazine called Partisan Review. In the late thirties this magazine was tops. All the leading writers who had broken from Stalinism wrote for it--the list was impressive--from Trotsky, Rivera, Breton to Rhav, Winters, Farrell and so on. This magazine is still coming out but of course has swung much to the right and has become much more literary in the sense of being divorced from politics. It is certain that there would be most valuable m terial in Partisan Review on Auden--material which woul be right up your alley. Auden identified himself with the Stalinist intellectual fronts, he never to my knowledge took a revolutionary position but a reformist-popular front position. It would therefore be worth looking up the index if one is available f such magazines as THE MASSES, Mainstream, The Marxist Quarterly all of US. The Stalinists no doubt have literary journals in England and I would think it would not be difficult to find their names. Any Review in The News Statesmean and Nation would be worth check ing on.

Let me know if such indexes and such material as I note above is available

We will attempt to fix things up so that one or two of them could go the the Trotsky school this coming fall. In all probability another one of them will bevtaking on the major work of building a youth group here. We have at last made some contact with some radical youth on the campus. By the time I pick this letter up they have come in. We havent settled matters yet--the holiday week-end is upon us. One of them just got recalled back to his job and will have to drop out of the tour. Probsbly they will go off to Peterboro for several days in order to give me time to put out the paper then I will join them off and on while they are in the Niagara Peninsula area. Last tour we made contact with some excellent former activists in the LPP. We expect that we will be able to get them to hold a couple of house meetings where I could speak.

Possibly when next you write we will be in a new quarters. We have a bid in for an excellent place down the next block from where we are. We will know how it goes by this Thursday. The store is much than the present one but that is not its main asset. For the first time we may have a first rate headquarters with an entrace right off Yonge street. The hall will be about 18 ft by about 49-there will be officesattached and the basement is clear for us to do with it what we want. I am hoping we get the place although this morning I carried on quite an actixx that we couldn't care less. We have had to put in an official offer. It is pitiful to see how the broker attempts to shape the offer to meet the owners interests. Never talking as if it was a business offer--a dollar and cents offer but how the owners would like this and that and that. I called him over this morning and told him that the offer had to say what I want it to say. He didn't like it but I changed it to spell out exactly what we want. After all it involved for a a collosal expenditure--it has bound xxx into it as a condition that we lease a paortion out to another outfit. So as you see in order to become a tenant the landlord has forced us into being rent collectors for him. The episode reminds me of something out of Honore Balzac

Have you heard from Vancouver recently....and are you dropping in on the comrades there. Perhaps you know already of the unfortunate division that has taken place there. Then again perhaps it is not so unfortunate for as you must have been well aware for some years now there has been a sharp cleavage in our ranks. It is personal but has political overtones. What the full implications of the overtones are will probably be seen. At anyrate our forces have divided themselves and as Malvolm puts it throught this divusion they may well be able to grow now for it has long been apparent that Vancouver has suffered a certain paralysis. I would think that it would be best that you xxxx do not take sides. ..to begin with it would be difficult as the division is not primarily political and who wants to takes sides on any other basis. I feel that the best thingsxthat those of us who are to some degree outside of the whole thing is to aid them to find some way of collaborating with one anothor, of having laison so that we dont get at cross purposes, get in conflict over contacts, carry different policies where our activities overlap.

xxxxx Several weeks aog I had the pleasuere of meeting all the SWP West Coast comrades and seeing the SWP in action at its national convention. A truly inspiring experience. Everyone was there--Cannon, Swabeck, Dunne, Warde all the acitivsts from Fresno to Boston, there were also other notables like the Rev King who gave a fiery socialist address to the Negro panel. There were a considerable number of new young comrades who have been the fruit of the efforts in the youth movements in regroupment. I suppose you get the Militant so you will have read the excellent reports that appeaed several weeks ago. For the first time in over a decade Farrell was able to report some absolute gains in party membership. Moral is very high as was witnessed to the response immediate overwhelming respose to their financial difficulties. When they said they had no alternative but to vut the Militant down to every other week for thw summer months, furtehr reduce the ISR

and I told them that we considered this impermissible not only from the ppint of view of the SWP but the international movement and backed up our words by giving them $500 that we had put aside for a pamphlet the delegates responded by turning overin about 15 minutes well over $5,000 and upped branch pleadges considerably. You will be interested to know that they have decied to follow our lead and launch a cross-US tour. I have been busy lately providing them with information as to how our truck is constrcuted, what equipment they will need and so forth.

But it is now five to eight Saturday night and I started this letter if I am not mistaken on Thursday night so I had better let it go . Drop us a line when you have the opportunity

fraternally

Moss Dowson

1959-Nov

GOOD OR BAD (Radio broadcast, taped November 1959)

The overwhelming majority of us go about our business — working in the factories and offices, providing a home, raising children, without any awareness or thoughts of the stock exchange.

The few who have anything to do with the stock market if asked the question as to whether Bay Street was good or bad would he expected to say GOOD if they had managed to pick lip a few dollars lost by someone else through playing speculative stocks – or BAD if they anticipated doing so but met with failure and losses.

So I would say the answer to the question is Bay Street good or bad depends on here you stand. For the capitalist and for the present system, the stock exchange is necessary, it is a fact – period.

Stock promoter Dr. T.H Mitchell in his booklet The Small Investors Guide ties the stock market in with the development of capitalism. Through issuance of stock, capital as raised to make possible the development of the massive industrial machine that spreads across the country. This accumulation of capital has on the one hand permitted the expansion of the economy from a primitive one where Mr. Jones made shoes and traded them to Mr. Smith for a bushel of wheat – into the production of commodities on a mass scale for the market, and ownership of the means of production by a few.

On the other hand, while it has led to the production of goods on a cheaper basis it has also led to periodic crises (through the production of more goods than can be absorbed by the market at a certain time) to struggles for markets and areas to invest capital at an ever increasing profit (sometimes erupting into wars) and to the rise of vast monopolies that have completely estranged, divorced, the people from any control (and one might say any genuine interest) in production.

The stock market still serves that simple function — the accumulation of capital. With the further development of the system it has come to serve many other functions. Through the spreading of share ownership via the market into a number of hands — a few capitalists — with quite limited interests in a vast corporation — can complete1y control it. Although not the cause — the stock market has tremendously quickened the rise of monopoly.

One of the most obvious phenomena of today is the increasing control by US interests of the Canadian economy. Through a simple announcement on the market of what it was willing to pay for Ford of Canada shares, Ford of US quickly established control — leaving one with the sneaking suspicion that all the talk about Canadian rights and control is merely a matter of getting the right price.

The stock market is one of the few measures of the health, of the state of the economy. One day, back in 1929, it suddenly registered that society, despite a ruddy appearance, was sick and rotten within. Now, ironically, every time there is a move towards war, increased expenditures on

instruments of death and destruction, the stock market booms. Whenever there appears to be a certain stabilization in international relations the market registers collapse and disintegration.

This is Ross Dowson speaking.

81 Queen Street West
Toronto 1, Ont.
Dec 7, 1959

Dear Foe;

write
That was very good news. I must ~~right~~ to Minneapolis right away to tell them of our success. January 28 is not far away--probably much farther away from where you stand than from where I stand here--as time goes so rapidly on its way here. I did not think that it would come off so rapidly. I doubt that you could go to a better place. Yes I am sure that the job is waiting for you and that you will step off the train into a most satisfactory melieu. They will be even anticipating your arrival... your rehabilitation will be no problem whatsoever.

Yes there have been lots of things happening both big and small. Bruce and Bunny went on their way with just a minor protest--they left us something to read over. No there was no fight or trouble--they just want to move into a different melieu. Alas for them they moved in the direction of Cochrane and Conchrane is no more. Cochrane formally folded up the tent just a few days ago. There was a statement in the last issue of the~~xxx~~ magazine. Six years of trial and they see no possibilities so they are going off to the sidelines to await the new generation. Possibly one or two will return. I do not know what effect developments there will have on here. Probably none as the Toronto forum has been moving so fast and far to the right that it is competely accepted in the Bryden circle--and of course there is really nothing here anyway. It was so small here that they didn't have anyone who was carried on with illusions. Biggest development i the new party being prepared by Jodoing and Knowles. It is moving forward largely from on top but forward none the less. Tim is barking at its heel but as the story goes---the dogs bark but the wagon rolls on. There is a l of heat under Jodoin--Newfoundland and BC and now a whole host of promises from the Chember of Commerce. Dief himself has uttered the plea that what with the Soviet Union being a big trade threat we are all going to have t discipline ourselves or be disciplined and we are going to have to practic austerity--of course quite a few dont need the practice. They are even go so far as to ~~fathom~~ state that toy will be following our lead next Janua here in Toronto. Dont know whetehr they will go after Newman and Phillip however. They had a conference her in Toronto on Saturday--relatively smal no new faces-of course they were going to discuss program but again there just seemd to be no time. Lots to criticize but its future is assured. You can be sure we were there with Van. Alan is going to the south school which is just what he needed. Peter has come in from Ottawa. Been getting lots of mail from Vancouver. ~~xxxxxxxx~~ As you know from your studies in biology the amoeba solves its developing contradictions by splitting--once split the organism can grwo., it is of course also a way of sustaining lif as life probabilty is great with two organisms. Good grwoth there. And did you read about Ceylon?--the governor ~~gnasral~~ of our sister in the Commonw alth had called an election for March 20th. I wonder what effect the Chinese-Indian border dispute will have. Bound to be interesting and of great importance. And England--the papers repoted the meeting og Gaitskell and Bevan but carried very little of the Healy get-togehter--there were over 700

Thanks for the inofmration on the bookbinding. Everything has come t a halt with this and has been placed aside in a big pile. But we will cert ainly give your prescription a go. Well here we are moving into the last lap--shouldn't be too hard to take from here on in. Not many more letters for this address--looking forward to being able to pay a visit. Minneapolis is not so far from Winnipeg and we go West this coming year

81 Queen Street West
Toronto 1 Ont.
December 7, 1959

Vincent Dunne
322 Hennepin Avem Room 205
Minneapolis 1, Minn
U.S.A.

Dear Vince;

Heretofore I have always had a feeling of uneaseabout letters written on peculiar coloured paper--like Jim wrote about fellows wearing corduroy suits--but I can see a real value. In amongst the very tall pile of accumualted letters that I have not answered I was able to pull yoursat a flash.

Good news. Contrary to all our expectations our friend Joseph Johnson has been granted a parole. It came through last week and will be operative January 28, 1960--on us in no time at all. "The only thing," he writes,"is the approval by the government of the job, and this should be no trouble and forthcoming shortly." He ~~xxxxxxx~~tells me that he assumed that the job with the L. Martin Company is available whenever the parole date is set. I wrote yes.

Put aside any bookbinding that you were planning on doing. He tells me that this was one of the few things that he had an opportunity to learn You got the man to do it now. In fact you have a real asset...will have on January 29th or thereabouts.

Thanks for your prompt reply to the last rush letter and for all you have done

Hope things go well for us in Minneapolis. Received the letter about the store. Happen to have on hand last years edition of Books in Print. If it isn't claimed in the next week or so by Vancouver how would you like me to send it along. It lists all the books in print as of last year. We have the new one now but this might be of use in the store. If you have a passing by trade you are often asked for a book--well you can get it for the customer without your laying out any money if you get a deposit for it-and know the publisher and order it.

Hope the approaching winter finds you in good health-Vince

socialist greetings

Ross Dowson

Friday December 17,1959

Dear Ruth;

Thanks for the pile of correspondence you have been sending this way. Today is the first chance that I have had to return the favor. The paper is well underway--will probably be off Monday and at anyrate the printer cannot take copy today--furthermore I will be stuck up in the store tonight and unless some unusually good type turns up I will be able to continue this letter from there. Have just returned from marrying off Patricia, who you know, to Jim Mitchell and seeing Ernie at the hospital. We have two comrades and the mother of one of the comrades in hospital right now. Ernie will be in until Christmas, he has Bells disease---a virus infection in the eye which during the process of one day rendered him blind in his one good eye. He has to lie flat on his back and is taking cortisone intravenously. He told me to day that it is beginning to clear up. An old timer of ours Bill Green, celebrated his 79th birthday in hospital recovering from a massive heart attack. Looks like he will recover--he is fighting to get back his pants so he can get out

Received a letter from Alan today. He is up to his neck in the work of the school and if only a miniscule portion of what he is being compelled to read and to listen to and to speak about to the others sticks on him, he will be a vastly improved revolutionary socialist when he returns. They are putting on a big Christams affair to make money to keep things going so won't be back for a visit until sometime in January.

Received a couple of lengthy letters from Ken Grieve. It is somewhat suprising to hear that he is not a member of the Branch 1--that he knew nothing about what had taken place until he went to the south. From one of his letter I gather we have a comrade in Vancouver circulating the Mercyite paper. This part is not written too clearly but I gather that is what he is meaning. I am wondering if this is true and just why anyone would take it upon himself to circulate it. From the last few issues it looks like it will shortly be the official American voice of Pablism. A couple of items that Ken sent I thought were very good. One of them is a quite lengthy article that he apparently circulated in Stanley Park circles explaining his views on Cedric Cox's statements to the Trail press. This article is very well thought out and a rounded and effective attack on certain tendencies that we have found even here in CCF circles that are against the developing labor party. I can imagine many in Stanley Park, with the very narrow perspective that I felt when talking to them when last out there, are very nervous about the labor party development. Cox's statement would strike a warm response

I suppose you noticed the column we ran last issue of notes and comments on the labor party developments across the country. We are very much interested in receiving short items that illuminate certain problems. This column is possibly the most important thing in the paper right now. It is vital that the Vanguard establish itself as the voice of socialism in the labor party. In this respect I thought that the [illegible] reporting Pat Brein's good work at the UE convention was most valuable. Looks like the Stalinists are trying to get off the hook that their policies towards the labor party have put them. In the latest Canadian Tribune they are opening a page for comments and letters on the whole question. Pat put them through a laboratory experiment at the UE convention. Couldn't be clearer that the issue was support or non support of a labor party.

and that the question of democracy in so far as they raise it--involving the UE and Mine Mill, is an academic one, since they have in no way signified support, quite the contrary, to the developing labor party.

Did you see Grieve's article? What impact did it have? From how things look out there do you think it valuable for the Vanguard to carry an article of some length explaining why socialists must support the labor party. I doubt that it would be from strictly Eastern Cdn needs. Does Grieve hang around the Socialist Frum at all.

Received the latest issue of Press and noted the short comments in the minutes. I did not get any impression just what our reactions were to the suggestions that we get involved in Press production. What is our thinking on this matter? While Malcolm and a few others have been able to get a few worthwhile articles in Press generally speaking in my opinion it has a bad influence on persons who might otherwise develop in our direction. For instance Phil Howard gives me the impression of not being a bad sort--but Press provides him with a little circle to play around in--a circle that rejects any meaningful participation in the real processes of the class struggle. He just hasn't any concept of the need for a class struggle program. When he was here last I really pressed upon him those articles that we wrote when we were trying to get into a serious discussion with the Gagnon group---particularly the one on the need and the type of program to make socialism a meaningful force. During the tour out there last time we found quite a few of the left prefering the Press over the Vanguard and obviously not from any of the weak aspects of the Vanguard but for totally false reasons. One might say that this is what this "left" really is, sectarian, divorced from life and happy in their separation--but Press gives them a reason to be and a comfortable adjustment to this state.

When there last I received a fairly good impression of MacKenzie. He has many misteken opinions about what we are which I thought at the time could be straightened out. Several months ago he wrote us a lyrical letter about one of the issues of the Vanguard. I see the Press people are coming around the Forum. I am wondering now that the Press seems to be on the way out whether it would not be possible to get one or two of them to submit material to the Vanguard. Should Press continue to go down it might be possible that their Labor Party might also go under. What do you think of the possibilities of recruitment there?

That was good news about the demise of the American Socialist eh. It took a little less time in their case than was the case of the Shachtmanites--a verification that there is no other path than the one that we are on. Possibly our minutes here would mislead you. There is nothing here with the American Socialist supporters for us. It will not have any real effect on the Labor (formerly Socialist) forum. It will probably cut them off from the few more or less socialist speakers that they brought in from Detroit and the circuit that the American Socialist probably had in operation. Henceforth the speakers will be of one color--white with a few pink markings. The demise of the American Socialist won't have any effect because aside from Joe who did the art work none of them took it or the forum seriously--a sort of recreational activity easily indulged in every other month or so.

Max Armstrong was telling me of an Oscar Ameringer comment on the Milwaukee Socialists. First they start off with discussion and a little beer, as time goes on they have less discussion and more beer and less and less discussion and more beer, until they just have beer. The chap who lives above me is a petty bourgeois type who is convinced that Marx's theories are outdated and wrong, went to the last forum where Selsberg spoke. He told me that he had heard that it was attended by old people who had all been through the radical movement so he had not expected too much but

he thought that there might be a little fire in one or two yet. He was supr ised how warn out the whole thing was.

Jerry went through all the material that has been coming in from Van couver the other night and gave a detailed report to the branch. Everyone was tremendously impressed by the response that the Socialist Forum is getting and the growth of Number two. We seem to be in a bit of a doldrum right now. For the first time in somewhile we dont have any really hot contacts. There are some people coming around. We had a Cuban socialist who dropped in on us on the way back home from a trip to Russia. We have a Spaniard who is reading our South American press. Perhaps the best situation is the youth field. I am enclosing a copy of the leaflet that we distributed to the Toronto campus meeting on nuclear disarmament in case Malcolm didn't pass it on. Wont say anything about these developments as there is good coverage in the coming issue of Vanguard. Our big problem is that while things are moving on the campus we dont actually have anyone there. We have connections, good ones, with the professor who is a sort of mentor of the Socialist Forum which got underway a few weeks ago with an audience of 60 odd students. The club is being redbaited thanks to one of the executive announcing himself as the president of the Communist Party campus club. We have turned up a couple of really excellent students who go to a high school in an outlying area. Then we have another good one at the semi-private University of Toronto schools who is just coming out of a pacifist stage toward revolutionary socialism. **But these youth are under strong parental domination besides considerable school demands and we are unable at this time to consolidate our influence on them.**

Interested in Margaret Erickson's comments on the Vanguard. Can it be that she is really giving you a contribution but cannot bring herself to say so. Her subscription already carries her for another two years and now she is up to number 93. I checked to make sure that she is getting it---the adress on the plate, everything has been ok here.

I gather that the information in News and Views aside from the smut is incorrect. The Pacific Tribune is still coming out and apparently without any real trouble--other than the trouble that our stepped up activitites are causing it. The selling of the Boiler makers Hall would be a staggering setback for the Stalinists wouldn't it?

Possibly you have been wondering why there has been no action taken with regards to sending the expiration lists to Shelley. The problem here is the lack of liason that Branch 1 has with Branch 2. I wrote Branch 1 about this matter again--for if at all possibl whatever arrangments are to be made should be mutually satisfactory. If they do not answer to another letter that I intend to send out tonight I will assume that they are not interested and will send the works along to Shelley.

Note in the November 5th minutes a discussion on holding CCF memberships. Yes, It is n't that we must have a membership card in the CCF. But the notes say that it was agreed that those members finding it impossible to continue in membership should drop their member ships. I know that these notes are very sketchy but in my opinion where we have not set up a formal organization as in Vancouver with certain comrades of necessity and quite publicly being identified with this independent organization, we should if at all possible all have memberships. What we do with them, how active we are in the CCF, is of course another matter but off hand what are the circumstances and who would it possibly be who finds it impossible to continue in membership ?

Reports of the forums and the socials are very impressive. Only $9.65 worth of literature sold. Why we never sell any literature at our socials---at most circulate some through socials. And what is the big source of your income? Will send you photos of our place when we get hold of a camera

You ask about the use of party names here. It so happens we have quite a few comrades working in the CCF---at least I should say holding memberships and doing the odd thing that

we think to be worthwhile. I suppose you know that the Saskatchewan CCF has commenced publication of a national youth paper. There is also talk about the new party setting up a youth movement. We have a comrade who has a clean CCF youth background who we have working in this arena. He attends our forums and of course all branch meetings but as best we can we keep him out of public SEL activity. We have another comrade who is active in one of the few active Toronto CCF clubs. We are not so worried about him. He has been identified by many as an SELer, he speaks on our platform--he would never deny membership if faced with this matter but we are interested in modest safeguards that cause us no difficulty. We have another young couple who are active in another CCF club. One of them is a known SELer but no one has raised the matter--and we aren't interested. We have other comrades who have jobs where there is no union protection. Pseudonyms have some use. There is no romantic nonsense here about it

Yes I recall the oil worker rep our contact came across. Just before leaving from Sarnia two of them came into the store. One of them, a fellow about 30-35 had been in previously and I had sold him Notebook of an Agitator plus. The older fellow he came in with this last time was obviously a man who had been around the left , probably around the SP of C or in his youth around the Wobblies. He was somewhat leery of me and it took a little time to break the ice. Sold them quite a bit of material. One was going to Winnipeg and if I recall the younger fellow to Vancouver. If I am not mistaken I gave him the bookstore address. Tried to get a sub from each but no dice. Glad Reg has been able to latch onto the Vancouver one. I am sure he would have useful leads

Got a long letter from Tom last month--will have to take it up this week-end but the scrawl is impossible.

Sorry must break this note off

warmest regards

Ross

Got Reg's letter on the store. Incidently he had it addressed King Street while we are on Queen--followed me for about two weeks before arrival as the directory had an old residential address. Will pick it up later. Havent heard from Bill since I sent him the letter that you received a copy of so I do not have any idea what has happened . I think your approach to this matter is somewhat formalistic. I would be most anxious to have a meeting over the problems of the store. If Bill didn't call one I would go over myself. I dont want to sink any more money in the store. I want to rescue what there is. I want to sustain the store, to help to do so in anyway I can. Whether it is now or not, the store can be a valuable asset to us all politically--I would be most anxious to talk over what can be done to save it

December 28, 1959

Dear Ruth;

Along in today's mail with your latest batch of minutes came a long awaited letter from Bill--it is dated December 11th.

He takes up the matter of the subscription lists. He, as a matter of fact, tells me to send them on to Charlie. He goes on to give me their version of the problem that confronts us with regards to the list and collaboration in general. He writes; "About collaboration, you are right, there is none, but we told you this from the beginning--that there would be none also was a forgone conclusion We took all the necessary steps on four different ocassions-sent you some of the correspondence, etc. You know the results--why are you suprised now. In connection with collaboration on sub drives--well we are willing to try that too--send us the lists and we will have Charlie try and get them to collaborate with organizing a drive."

As you now see I have been given diametrically opposite instructions with regards to the handling of the sub lists. We have also been given two totally different versions as to what stands in the way of even minimal collaboration.

It seems to me that this matter can easily be rectified. Both Branch one and two claim to be ready willing and able to collaborate. Ruth, you were the organizer of them before the division. On behalf of Branch 2 why don't you write a short note to branch one setting a time and place, very shortly and quite convenient, for them to send someone to make the arrangments with regards to the lists. The list is composed of six month and now one yearer subscription expirees--they are concentrated in 5 or six concentrated areas in the city. Upon the receipt of a letter containing a mutually satisfactory address I will send the lists on.

Along with another note he tells us of Farrell's coming visit to Seattle. But unfortunately he goes on to state that it is doubtful if anyone will be able to attend. I note from your minutes that you are considering asking Farrell to come up to Vancouver. This would be the best situation--this would assure Farrell meeting and talking with the most influential comrades. I hope that you are successful in arranging it with Seattle. I intend to drop Farrell a note in Seattle

warmest regards

Ross

Had anticipated that Malcolm or someone else would be sending us something in on Harold Winch's activities and possibly Cox's. Probably we have said all that need be said about Cox. But the next issue could well use material on Winch. There are probably two main angles of approach---reaction through the unions and the CCF using effective quotes--or ourselves writing up an educational article with a l the appropriate data. How have the comrades liked the last few issues? Could have used material on the constituency level-CCF Tu conferences. Interested in progress notes on the Labor party for our column

Dec 30, 1959
81 Queen Street West
Toronto 1, Ont.

Mr and Mrs [redacted]. Johnson
Chippewa Falls, Wis
U.S.A.

Dear Friends;

That was good news indeed. To us up here and I am sure that it has been the same for you folks the time had sped by quickly. It is hard to believe that Joe will be released out into the world again. Only a few weeks and you will be able to embrace him. No doubt this experience has left some scars on him--being cooped up so long. An inhumen way of exacting retirubtion--and for what. But Joe went in as fortified against deterioration as any one could possibly be. And I think that you will find that he has actually grown and matured under the experience. Not that this is much compensation for that portion of his life, our most precious asset, that they have taken away from him. But Joe went in with sufficient understanding that he grapp what value, whatever value could be grapp out of this experience.

Prison, isolation from humankind is used to break those of us who have protested the inhuman and anti-social decrees of those who rule over us. In some cases they have succeeded but in many others they have only strengthened the spirit and character and resolution of their vittims. Our histroy abounds with such examples--from Tom Paine, to Eugene V Debs and thousands more whose names are ensoribed on the roll but you have to approach closer to read them.

Joe's last letter--I received it shortly before Christmas, showed that in his case they have not succeeded. It breathed life, vigor, confidence. He has read and studied from what worthwhile material was available and he has learned what they were prepared to teach him. He took time out to write out in detail a process he has learned of how to bind papers. He knew that this would be of interest to us as we have been doing some of this work although quite inefficiently. Not only is he in good mental health But from incidental comments he is in good physical health also.

I hope that Minneapolis is not too far away--that his parole will permit him to come to you or if not that it is not too far for you to visit him. Did xmx he tell you of the job arrangment that we have been able to make. There shouldn't be any htiches of any kind. I am sure he will be back into the swing of things very quickly.

Yesterday I received your very nice gift in the mail. It was held up a bit by reason of our moving from the previous address. It is getting quite cold up here. You can be sure that each time that I put the scarf on I will remember our correspondence which while arising through unplea-

circumstances was quite gratifying.

sincerely

Ross Dowson

Marx — on his own views

Correspondence

57
219
226-27
223-26
232

376
348 cf
474

And now-as to myself no credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes in modern society nor yet the struggle between them x Long before me bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this class struggle and bourgeois economists the economic anatomy of the classes What I did that was new was to prove: (1) that the existence of classes is only bound up with particular, historic phases in the development of production; (2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat; (3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society. 1852

From this time onwards he began to make the study of political economy, the investigation and discovery of the laws of movement governing capitalist society, his life work, not for purely scientific ends, but in order to forge a weapon for the proletariat by providing them for the theoretical basis of their struggle for freedom x — note in Correspondence —

NB — Proletarian party — workers party — not discussion circle
p 376 takes knowledge available that suits its purpose — de reuter

" If the War party or can adopt a line corresponding to the views of these gentlemen, then nothing remains for us, much tho we should regret it, but publicly to declare war opposition to it and to dissolve the solidarity.

" We make our own history, but in the first place under very definite presuppositions + conditions. Among these the economic ones are finally decisive. But the political ones, and even the traditions that haunt human minds also play a part, although not the decisive one

---

Notes found in 1959
attached to E. Germain (Mandel)
article in F.I. journal
"Marxism as seen by bourgeois economists"

Handwritten letter by RD, undated, 1959 radio broadcasts

Dear Jerry:

Just a line. Alan wanted to go out distributing so I am in the store for a few hours. Have received extensive material on your "crimes" and will be dropping you some mail right after the elections. Have Ruth's letter to answer too. But right now we are trying to make the best of the situation in the elections.

Press blackout is most complete ever! Probably worried about our new party appeal – on top of that it is going to be a close race between the three and the Star is anxious to get every single labor vote for Lamport. Our vote will be very hard. Fortunately we have had a few breaks aside from our two leaflets (B of E & Alan & Mine). 10 min. CKFH and 2-7 minutes CFRB – a very good program at a good time. Then Friday – CBC TV – possibly a little TV tonight at city hall.

Our boys in Teamsters organized an excellent meeting the other night.

Joe's not qualifying knocked our Nov. issue for a loop. Had done preliminary campaigning he'd planned 3 or 4 days before moving into mayoralty then suddenly we are without any literature. Dropped everything and put heat on printer to get other 2 leaflets out – got them to shove everything aside and we were back in business in 2 days – precious days

1959

Document on the problems of building a vanguard party, by Ross Dowson (unsigned and undated, found in 1959 and relating to correspondence of December announcing the defection of two leading comrades)

The building of the revolutionary socialist vanguard party, commenced in this country in 1921 and through which the Canadian socialist revolution is alone possible, has proven more difficult than its initiators could have possibly imagined. It has been more difficult on the North American continent than perhaps anywhere else in the world.

Some of the obstacles to its growth are obvious at a glance — the extended period of relative American capitalist stability at the expense of the rest of the world economy, combined with the diversionist and treacherous role of Stalinism and Social Democracy of the CCF and trade union bureaucracy varieties. Both these objective and subjective forces have not only blocked the movement of the masses from class struggle actions which would project the best elements towards the forces attempting to build the mass revolutionary party. They have put the cadre forces of the socialist revolution through one test after another. Whole generations of revolutionaries have been destroyed.

The present generation of revolutionary socialists have never known any period when their view appeared to be in harmony with the level of activity and experience of any large layer of the Canadian working class. There have been no massive class actions now since the mid-forties, almost 15 years. The present cadre has been built up not so such in the course of everyday experience in the class struggle and the ability of the party to give guidance on the arena of the class struggle. It has been built on the basis of the grasp by individuals of the great accumulated experiences of the world movement, largely past experience, distilled in its theory. As the period of relative class stability has extended this theory which is the precious capital for the future has tended to appear increasingly more abstract, divorced from life, belonging to another epoch.

Stalinism and Social Democracy have undergone a profound decline. While the relationship of forces has suffered more to the favor of the Trotskyists promising well for the future, we have made few immediate and concrete gains from their decline. The bulk of dissidents have disappeared from the political arena; the failure of the few who have remained to show some signs of life, to become a current; indeed the absence of any viable left wing currents in the CCF, the union movement, anywhere, outside of ourselves, except the Gagnon group in Quebec, has only served to heighten the feeling of isolation in the ranks of the vanguard. On the other hand, while the Trotskyists, the revolutionary socialists, appear to be iso1ated, the trade union movement while suffering grave decline and considerable difficulties nonetheless remains a massive movement. The CCF has solved its crisis by projecting a labor party which holds out new promises of advance.

On the international arena, while the Trotskyists are making great gains in England, and appear to be on the verge of power in Ceylon, the major post World War II revolutionary successes, the Yugolslav revolution and the greatest upheaval since the Russian Revolution, the Chinese revolution, superficially appear to have done violence to revolutionary socialist theory.

The task of defending the precious revolutionary heritage, of defending the Marxist theory and of enriching it, has exhausted the strength of sections of the cadre and they have dropped away. Others, impatient with the pace of history, have come to look upon the theory as a dogma and its material, physical expression — the party — as a straightjacket which itself is responsible for their isolation.

This is the background of a series of defections from our movement over the past decade — the Rose group, the group that identified itself with Pablo to quickly slip into the Cochranite tendency, and now Wein and Batten. It is the objective conditions, and not at all the SEL's "approach to life, both political and personal" that is the cause, of "the toll in influence and in human material" as Virginia Wein and Bruce Batten claim in the document which they dropped into our laps as they fled pulling four new and unassimilated recruits along with them into political limbo. It is not our "approach to politics" that "is at the root of the isolation of the SEL as much as the objective conditions" as they claim.

All three splinters stand on a common ground. They have given up the struggle to build the Bolshevik-Leninist party and now list themselves in the ranks of the opponents of a Bolshevik-Leninist party. The main persons identified with the splits, when in the movement, marked themselves out as the most vigorous and in some cases even vicious opponents of their predecessors. But it was no accident that the Pabloists quickly linked themselves with the Rose family-clique which traveled the course from opposition to entry in the CCF to acting as informers to the CCF bureaucrats to actual liquidation into the CCF. It was no accident that the Pabloists, having lost the struggle in democratic debate, attempted to make the split issue an organizational one over the refusal to admit Rose back into the party on the eve of the convention called to decide the position of the Canadian section re support of Pablo or the International Committee, and attempted to financially bankrupt the party by committing it to an emergency national convention and then pulling out.

While Batten opposed the Pabloists and Wein pulled out with them only later to dissociate herself from them and rejoin the SEL, they now identify their differences with Rose's (group), with "many before us in the SEL." Now, according to Batten, the malady has been with the SEL six years — roughly the date of Rose's withdrawal.

Like the Pabloists before them and Rose before the Pabloists, Batten and Wein are much stronger in the criticism of the program of the SEL, its organization, its tactics and strategy, the handmaidens of its program, than they are in projecting a new course. Without even documenting their views, our Pabloists rejected Trotskyism in favor of some "new reality". Batten and Wein write that "it is not so much a definite political issue" that compels them to leave the political organization called the SEL, but refer to some undefined "new social forces (which) are developing unprecendented power and strength, often in new and unexpected forms and along diverse paths, but all headings towards the same general goal…"

The Pabloists promised the socialist revolution without the revolutionary party – through mass pressure on the existing organizations of the working class (here the CCF) and the third World, the thermonuclear war. Batten and Wein, as they desert the SEL, call for the "rebuilding"

of the "shattered socialist movement" (referring to the crisis-wracked CCF and LPP) but how and along what lines one can only grasp from incidental comments scattered through their ten-page document.

Since everyone knows that the SEL is straining every nerve to realize the regroupment of socialists in the direction of the building of a revolutionary party, in order to justify their defection, Wein and Batten attempt to prove that the 1ack of favorable developments in this area has been due not to certain forces over which we have no control, but to certain fundamenta1 flaws in the SEL's own makeup. The picture presented by their document in this respect does such violence to the facts and is so slanderous that one is compelled to think that the document has been written for circulation outside the SEL to attempt to block it in its further efforts.

It is of course not true that SELers jeered and described in four letter words contributions to the Socialist Forum Review and outside contributions to The Vanguard. The SEL welcomed these contributions. But it is true that the SEL not only sought points of agreement, but at the same time to fraternal1y exchange views on the points of disagreement. It is also true that Wein sought to cover up and smear over the differences so that there could be no serious discussion on re1ated problems as there shou1d be amongst socialists. The SEL did everything within the limit of its resources both physica1 and financia1 to participate in this process of rebuilding along with the Counci1 of Socialist Clubs. Aside from organizing a nationa1 tour, financing a pamphlet, etc. one of its efforts involved Batten and Wein themselves. It arranged to send them down to Montreal with the aim of establishing long term and on-the-spot collaboration with the Council of Socialist Clubs and others there. Batten and Wein dealt the biggest blow to this collaboration with their sudden and completely personally motivated withdraw1 from Montrea1. They themselves date their return to Toronto as the real turning point in their relations with the SEL. Of course they could not be referring to the national secretary's appea1 to the Toronto branch of the SEL to overlook their grievous blow to this work at the meeting before their arriva1 when they refer to his winking and encouraging "a11 the most backward and immature tendencies in its ranks."

According to Batten and Wein, relations between other socialists, "uncommitted independents" and the SEL are "poisonous." They of course not referring to longtime prejudices against Trotskyism implanted by Sta1inism or bourgeois ideologists. According to them, the sources of these poisonous re1ations is the SEL itself and f1ow from its attitude to other socialists, a case in point being the Labor (formerly the Socialist) Forum.

The significance of this forum is grossly inflated, its character extravagantly distorted. To be sure, between the SEL and the closed circle that bureaucratically control the Labor Forum, there is a hostile relationship. But it doesn't come from the SEL side. It just so happens that Rose and a couple of other ex-Trotskyists whenever possible have turned it into an anti-Trotskyist affair with provocative and total1y uncal1ed for attacks on democratic centralism, on Bolshevism, with confessions "I was a Trotskyist," etc.

There are a few CCF leftists around the forum but they are not hostile to the SEL, on the contrary severa1 celebrated the opening of our new headquarters with us.

An attempt is made to present the Forum as an area of regroupment which it is not. It is an area of conciliationism with the right wing leadership of the CCF and the trade union bureaucracy. That is even the significance of Salsberg's modest donation to the forum. It is very narrow, with the few radica1s around it so anxious to appear respectable that it has become a vehicle for the extreme right, some of its greatest achievements having been a semi-official approval from the editor or the CCF News, and the providing of a platform for the renegade CCF MP Douglas Fisher.

If Dowson did express the sentiments attributed to him "the hope that it would go under and leave the regroupment field clear to the SEL" it was in this context. That quite contrary to the picture presented by Batten and Wein, the Forum is viciously anti-Trotskyist and has served as a substitute for and stood in the way of regroupment of socialists.

Like the Pabloists before them, Batten and Wein want to get rid or the old Trotskyism, in fact the old Leninism. As for Marxism, they see it only as a method.

Marxism is certainly a method — dialectical materialism is its methodology. But Marx applied this method, as did Lenin and Trotsky, and as must we. Marx left us much more than just his method. To be sure Lenin and Trotsky were brilliant students of Marx — masters at applying his method. They left us much more than just an example of application. Marx analyzed capitalism, he discovered the laws governing its development and determining its destruction. He had a most fruitful political experience in the labor and socialist movement of his day. Lenin built the Bolshevik party and with Trotsky led the first successful seizure of power. Through the Comintern (the international forum of world communist parties, which hosted under the leadership and prestige of the Russian Soviets in 1917, later degenerated to its opposite as a system of control under the Stalin bureaucracy --ed.), they generalized their experiences. Trotsky put Social Democracy, Stalinism and Fascism under the microscope. Marxism is much more than a method — it is a vast accumulation of hard won and dearly paid for experience – it is a program. Not closed, comrades Batten and Wein, but full, rounded, finished in the sense that it has the answers to all the key, the fundamental problems of our time.

One would expect, after all the words about the Marxist method, that it would find application in the document. According to Batten and Wein, "the organizational methods of the SEL are those of Stalinism," and not just the ordinary everyday garden variety of Stalinism, but "Stalinism at its worst." Further along, they emphasize, the SEL suffers "all the worst aspects of the Stalinist monolith… including the 'cult of the individual'"!

The facts, the evidence to back up this fantastic charge are strangely missing. Not a document is quoted, not an incident is related to unmask the "Stalinist monolith… the cult of the individual" in the SEL.

It is a strange Stalinism, a strange cult of the individual and monolith, indeed, that Batten and Wein have suffered under. Where everything they ever wrote was published and more sought. Where Wein was favored and honoured with the biggest educational opportunity available to the

SEL, where attempts were made to groom her for editor of the press. Where SEL members far from looking upon Marxian education as academic, so responded to a class she was asked to conduct that Wein protested the attendance made it unwieldy. A strange lack of democracy and interest in ideas where Batten after convincing the majority of the value of a certain topic, a week before delivery moves withdrawal of the subject and declines as speaker – and when the branch proceeds with a substitute speaker remains silent.

Since there are no expulsions, no suppressions, let us even suppose this talk about Stalinism at its worst being prevalent in the SEL is in some degree exaggerated – perhaps there is some truth in the charge? There is a bureaucracy of some sort in the SEL? – like in the trade-union

(this copy of the document ends; from original file “R.Dowson 1956-57” sent to National Archives, Ottawa.)